9: Parrish NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For additional information on the songs and musical texts of the Georgia Sea Islands, see Category 53.]

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794 796 Muh ole name is dead an now tings reign tru Fathuh Divine. Peace Thanks, Fathuh."

794 796 786 As the evening wears on, more of the devotees join in the chanting and in the spirited singing of the hymns. Demonstrations become more and more violent. Several of the congregation, caught in the throes of a powerful religious intoxication, begin to dance and sway with abandonment.[19] [533] Others in the group encourage the dancers with a rhythmic clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

[533] On and on the dancers whirl while the piano pounds out its accompaniment; above the din rises the wailed repetitious version of an improvised hymn. The participants in the dance seem oblivious to everything except the series of contortions in which they are indulging. Eyes half closed, fixed smiles on their faces, every muscle in their bodies aquiver, they stumble blindly on. Some bump into the wooden benches, others fall exhausted to the floor. Still the dance goes on.[46]

[793] Over and over can be heard the hoarse chanting of the worshipers as they continue to give praise to Father Divine, the man who, according to their own account, was not born in the ordinary manner but was "combusted" one day in New York City and who was sent to earth to save his followers from destruction.

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115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud
dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny
(226) name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use
tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill
(224) squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo bahk.' Some-
• [533] time he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda
do dandy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuh-
day.' "

754 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we asked.

789 "Dat he did. I sho wuz sked ub im wen he use tuh talk bout dem ting he people in Africa could do.[15, 22a, e, 48] Some ub em could make yuh disappeah, he say, an some could fly all roun duh elements an make yuh do anyting dey wants yuh tuh do. Wen I growd up, I discobuh dat plenty uh duh tings gran tell me is sho nuff true."

"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

"Me an muh sistuh bote. Witches use tuh ride uh regluh till it seem she gwine swivel away an die.[69] One day a man tell uh tuh tro salt on duh bed an no witch would bodduh uh. So dat ebenin muh sistuh sprinkle a heap uh salt on uh cubbuh.[69a] Soon attuh we git tuh bed, I seen a cat come [68] right in duh doe an look me in duh eye. I try tuh holluh but uh couldn make a soun. Nex ting I know sistuh wuz poin watuh in muh face.

"I dohn take tuh witches," said Martha Page. "I dohn
(845) mine ghos, cuz I caahn see em as I wuzn bawn wid a caul.[4]
But I dohn want no mo sperience wid witches. Das wy uh
sprinkle salt down ebry night uh muh life."

The broom precaution against witches is also believed in

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* *Martha Page, 606 Zubly Street.*

794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
793 multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file
796 before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they
pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace[32]
796 has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
[778] ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a news-
[432] paper published by the cult. These are believed to possess unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found
[755] for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many
786 now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

796 786 less of the hindrance to the rest of the worshipers, jumps up and down wildly, crying out in a shrill, hysterical voice. At length, exhausted, he sinks to the floor and is dragged by friends from under the whirling feet of the others.

One woman, seized by such a paroxysm, falls to her knees, screaming incoherently. Exhausted by her violent emotion, she lies on the rough board floor, her jaws hanging open loosely, her eyes closed. Slowly, she raises her hands and beats them together muttering, "Praise Daddy. Praise Daddy Grace."

[533] The pulsating rhythm of the instruments increases in tempo. A man leaps high into the air, gesticulating and babbling; faster and faster he whirls, until he too falls from utter exhaustion. Still the wild display continues. The terrific nervous strain is taking its toll, and now all but a few of the dancers stumble wearily. The steady, insistent sound of the drum urges them on; feet still shuffle, hands beat out the rhythm, and voices chant an incoherent incantation.

796 Abruptly the band ceases and members straggle back to their places. Those who have fallen out from exhaustion are dragged to the benches by their friends.

796 794 The service continues. During the evening many collections are taken up. Two of the deacons, acting on behalf of the Bishop, urge the people to contribute freely. Their methods of approach present a strong contrast. One, stout, dark-skinned, and clad in a pearl gray suit, has a gentle and persuasive manner. He says softly to the congregation, "Precious Haht, hep us tuh raise fawty bucks fuh Daddy Grace right quick. Wile duh Prophet sits on duh throne befo us, let us all contribute freely tuh him."

The other deacon, short and wiry, darts about among the congregation. His manner of speaking is quick, and he barks his orders to first one and then another of the church members. "Step right up now," he advises. "Dohn hole back on us. Anybody else now, come right up an contribute.

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796 unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent
793 that she is seized with violent convulsions.

(786) Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of
(782) the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on
(152) hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out
•(533) a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

551 Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in
(115) which they had been born. Thursday Jones,[*] when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on."[20]

Another man[**] told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

[*] *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*

[**] *John Blackshear, 625 Grapevine Avenue.*

422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant
[324] item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc).A The grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been ex-
(789) ecuted with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[8, 32, 34c]

322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carv-
532 ing.[70a-e] He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb),B about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70c, d, e]

115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII),C well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on
115 the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did
•533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the
(539) following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

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* *Lee Ross, Ogeecheetown, near Brownville.*

** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeecheetown, near Brownville.*

A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G--Analyst]

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BROWNVILLE

Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi lai lai lai
Shi wali go
Dhun.

791 759 789 In the heart of the thriving Brownville community live fortune tellers, root doctors, and vendors of magic charms who conduct flourishing businesses.[22a, 8, 48] There is a ready market for their wares which are used for the various activities of daily living. Numerous perplexities pertaining to matters of business, luck, and love affairs are thought to be solved by the mere possession of certain charms.[8]

115 789 472 Mattie Sampson,* a robust young Negro woman, told us that she does an active mail order business as representative of the Lucky Heart Company, the Sweet Georgia Brown Company, and the Curio Products Company. She supports herself comfortably by means of selling her credulous neighbors good luck perfumes, roots, lodestones, and similar charms. "Duh chahms an good luck puhfumes an powduhs do deah wuk independent of any additional hep," Mattie said. "Ef anybody believe a puticuluh chahm is wut dey need, well, dat chahm will do duh wuk."

"Mos of muh customuhs depen on special chahms tuh bring em good luck," the young woman continued. "Dey nevuh puhmit deah supply tuh give out but awduh it ovuh an ovuh. I have sevral bes selluhs. One is duh *Mystic Mojo Love Sachet*. Dis is sometimes call *Quick Love Powduh* an is guaranteed tuh make yuh populuh, successful, an happy. Yuh use it tuh attrac a pusson an tuh make dat pusson admyuh an love yuh. A lill uh dis powduh is wone in a bag aroun duh neck aw rubbed on duh body. But ef yuh prefuh, yuh kin sprinkle it in duh dressuh draw aw in duh bottom uh duh shoes.

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* *Mattie Sampson, West 32nd Street.*

754 he speak tuh me, I tell im all bout duh root wuk an wy uh fyuhd duh gun. I ax im wouldn he uh done duh same an he say, 'Cose, but dohn do it agen.'

"I bin tuh duh poeleece tuh hep me but dey cuss me out. Once wen dat poeleece show up, duh uhmun wut tryin tuh fix me staht combin uh haiah. She kep it up till duh poeleece jis walk away. Den I went tuh a root doctuh an he tole me duh poeleece caahn do nuttn long as duh uhmun comb uh haiah. He tell me tuh use tuhpentine tuh destroy duh han wut she put down fuh me. Duh uhmun jist keep on wukin gense me an nobody couldn do nuttn tuh stop uh so I know I bettuh moob fo she git muh spirit."

534 In Brownville we found a man who knew how to make the old time drums. He made one for us out of a hollow log, across the end of which he tightly stretched a goat skin. He fastened the skin to the log by means of a number of wooden pegs. Unlike modern drums, this one was taller than it was wide, measuring about eighteen inches in length and ten inches in diameter.[25]

(115) The drum maker, James Collier,* a middle-aged, intelligent, well-educated Negro (Plate VI),A said he had made a number of drums in this primitive manner. Collier told us
764 that he had heard of drums having been used during funeral ceremonies in former years. The mourners beat the drum
•533 while on the way to the cemetery; after arriving they marched around the grave in a ring and beat the drum and shouted.[24] "They call it the dead march," explained the man.

775 "The spirit don't stay in the grave," he went on. "When the funeral procession stahts tuh leave, the spirit leaves the body an follows the people frum the graveyahd. It nevuh stays with the body."[56] A little later he volunteered the additional information, "Fuh the spirit tuh rest in the grave
(764) folks have tuh be buried at home. They nevuh feel right ef

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* *James Collier, 806 West 39th Street.*

A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-F--Analyst]

829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets.
Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh
wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [70d]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing
796 and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
● 533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the
"settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at
duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay
flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in
duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave.
Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen
all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
754 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa
789 and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick
Hamilton, had died three years previously.

There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones
829 Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon
Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his
native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked
at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he
was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
(322) attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
(286) carving and the making of farm implements [70d] and by the
women in making cloth.

779 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared,
"Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh
house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
(356) an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

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* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

777 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh
356 flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh
sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

•(533) " 'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead
tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole
house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh
place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm
777 on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh
825 sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen
yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin
watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

436 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it
seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw
789 it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his
shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily
removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height
and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his
sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country,
down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin
roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das
weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He
dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab
long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she
[759] feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum
root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn
make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say
dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[58a]

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* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is
comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh
die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs! [46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(231) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh
(845) mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline
um tuh um."

278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the
concoction was more effective when made from cauls of
women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we
• 533 turned the conversation to a culinary line.

"Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix
252 duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some
hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh
top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an
rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an
brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery
fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
787 muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh
(115) an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin
(757) willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she
explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done
talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm.
I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-

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759 * *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

123 But "Miz Minnie" felt differently. "Go long, yuh chillun. Go long wid yuh crahb an stop lissnin tuh grown folks." Minnie flapped her apron and they scattered like a brood of young chicks.

754 "Yasm, cose yuh do heah bout cunjuhin."[15] Minnie turned back to us. "Dasso. Dey's alluz talk bout it, an I know ole Lewis McIver (Plate XI)[A] wut libs yuh right now, wut foun a bottle buried in his mattress. He wuz sick an somebody wuz tryin tuh fix im. I seen dat bottle muhsef, wid muh own eyes. Yes, ma'am, I sho seen it. It hab yulluhlak oily lookin stuff in it an deah wuz a piece uh clawt stuck tru wid needles an pins in it."[8] Minnie looked worried at the mere memory. "I seen it fuh sho an dohn nobody know who put it deah. But Lewis is bettuh sence it wuz took out. He say he ain hab neah so much pain.

"Den wen muh ole uncle wuz sick,[15] dey sen fuh a ole uhmun wut know bout cunjuh[48] an she wehn out in duh yahd an dig up a piece uh clawt wadded intuh a ball wid nails in it an she cas it away. I seen dat too. She say somebody plant it deah gense im.

"Dey make mojoes outn anyting but dey do say grabeyahd dut[9] an nails an blood an haiah,[10] dey is impawtant.
Cose I know bettuhn belieb all dis," she laughed, "but it
make yuh sked an yuh sho full uh worry ef somebody tryin
tuh fix yuh." After cogitating on these dangers Minnie
(789) smiled, "But ef yuh weahs a silbuh dime tied tuh yuh ankle
an yuh step obuh anyting wut put down fuh yuh, duh dime'll
sho tun black sudden an quick an den yuh knows it."[12a, c, d]

682 Pin Point attained a certain measure of fame as the setting of the Bo-Cat murder in 1932. Limerick De Lancy,
674 Pin Point Negro nicknamed Bo-Cat, killed his wife, Catherine, and dropped her corpse into the deep waters near Hell
• (533) Gate. When the crime was discovered, the fact that it had
taken place on Friday, the thirteenth, loomed significant in
the consciousness of the small community and in no time in-

A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-K--Analyst]

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PIN POINT

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533 spired a ballad. Attributed to no single author but apparently added to from time to time, the ballad now runs:

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On duh thuteent day ub May
Yuh could heah ole Bo-Cat say,
"Git muh deed an policy.
Tun it in duh ashes way."

Den ole Catherine she begin tuh inquyuh.
Didn know ole Bo-Cat had dem in duh fyuh.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Put uh in duh boat,
Dey begin tuh float,
Dey float tuh duh Raccoon Keys.
He knock uh on duh knees.
Catherine holluh, "Wa-Wan-Wa."
Bo-Cat make uh "Na-Nan-Na."
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh bres
An duh oah done duh res.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh back
An duh oah miss an crack.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Wen Bo-Cat wehn back home
He meet uh daughtuh all alone.
Uh daughtuh say, "Bo-Cat, Bo-Cat,
Weah my mama is?"
Bo-Cat tun right out he head
An he tro uh cross duh bed.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

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•(533) Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
(539) Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

(115) One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh duh city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song." (777)

674 "Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

682 "Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body 764 wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

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* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

SANDFLY

791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a, e]

791 Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church
of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctify-
794 ing process in order to be saved. After this has been accom-
783 plished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We
[533] were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds
774 of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables.
262 The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[65]

791 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered
533 hearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby
202 settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

764 The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the[37b, c]
[782] mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[58b, e]

•533 Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also
202 remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A
[115] member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums
beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great
pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes
all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh dea-
796 cons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch
tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh
way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens
[533] an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh
songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently
301 worn on the ankle to insure good luck[8] and to give warning
by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the
789 wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one
[777] woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see
tings"[22a, e] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five
dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly
make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

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* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*

** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

115 One of the oldest of the residents is white-haired F. J. Jackson * who remembers his childhood days on "Massuh George Wiley plantation" when many freed Negroes stayed on to work in the cotton fields. Years have weakened his once sturdy frame and slowed down both thought and gesture, but the light of humor still gleams in his dimmed eyes. We found Jackson in the kitchen of his comfortable frame bungalow, a new house built to replace a little old shanty [227] [286] that was burned down. He was making a casting net, his twisted old fingers still deft with the cords. He conversed like one glad of congenial company.

"Does I membuh ole times?" he repeated in answer to our question. "Yes, I dohn git away frum dis place much now an uh jis sit roun an tink ub a long time ago. Deah wuzn no automobiles an duh only way tuh git tuh Savannah wuz by duh mule an caht aw git in duh road wid yuh foots. Not many uh duh people still livin wut come long wid me. Dey's bout gone. Me an ole man Bruurs Butluh's bout duh onlies ones lef uh duh fus settluhs.

115 567 "Yes, I membuhs duh plantation days. Massuh George wuz a slave dealuh fo duh waw, an he tuk us all, muh grandaddy, Lewis Hargray, an muh maw, an muh daddy—I name attuh him. Massuh George use tuh buy an sell but he wuz a good man an lot uh his slaves stay wid im on duh fahm attuh freedom. Dat big house in duh ben uh duh road wuz weah he lib, an dey still got duh ball an chain an duh banjo table in duh house now.

115 "Wen I lef duh fahm an moob tuh duh pint, ain but five wite families yuh. Ain no roadn nuttn, jis woods. I done a lot uh huntin an fishin. Deah wuz plenty uh deahs roun yuh.

"I use tuh go back tuh duh fahm on Satdy night fuh duh big times. Dey hab wut yuh call shouts. Wut kine uh •533 music did us hab?" Jackson's aged eyes twinkled. "We use

534 * *F. J. Jackson, Grimball's Point. Deceased July, 1940.*

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
● [533] lawg.[25b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an
tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a
hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips
uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight.
How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we
[283] make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, bas-
kets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and
cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age,
came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh
825 hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin
tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an
den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows
flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many
signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a
hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a]
but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh
root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people,
but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law
754 wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman.
He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five
yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix
wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

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* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

829 764 pray, dey come in an put deah han on duh frien an say goodbye.[30, 31] Den dey go home."

764 "We beat duh drum agen at duh fewnul."[24] This from
Uncle Jack. "We call it duh dead mahch. Jis a long slow
●533 beat. Boom-boom-boom. Beat duh drum. Den stop. Den
beat it agen."

534 We wanted to know what the drums looked like and the two men took turns in supplying the information.

Uncle Robert spoke first. "Duh ole drums wut duh Africans make wuz make out ub a skin uh some kine uh animal stretch obuh a holluh lawg. Dey didn eben take duh haiah off duh skin. Jis put it on datta way."[25]

Here Uncle Jack spoke up, "Ain so long sence dey stop makin drums. Wen I wuz a young man, we use tuh make um. Dey wuz fo-cawnuhed sometimes an wuz cubbuh wid a skin. Dey wuz bout fo feet high. At duh fewnul wen we beat duh drum we mahch roun duh grabe in a ring."

538 We asked if any of them knew any spider stories. There was some hesitancy; then they all said, "No'm."

[115] Celia Small,* a slim, middle-aged Negro woman, listened intently, nodding her head. We asked Celia if she had heard of them.

"Yes'm, muh granma she speak ub em many time an say dey's wicked." Celia laughed slyly. "She say dey talk bout um mung duh mens."

We asked if the spider had a name, like Brer Rabbit.

"No'm, he ain got no name. Lease, I ain nebuh heahd it. Only time I knows yuh call a spiduh wen yuh say, 'An Nancy got um,' an das wen he ketch duh fly.[53] Duh spiduh is wicked. Hab tuh be bery keahful bout um. He drop right down out uh duh sky on yuh."

"What about the spider stories?" we persisted.

Celia looked at us warningly. She laughed softly.

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* *Celia Small, Wilmington Island.*

115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

[123] After much persuasion we gained the older woman's confidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told
115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a settin-up."

262 "We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

272 "No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any
262 persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

535 The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

[533] "We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said. "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

[202] "Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[26] Den dey heah it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with
matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac
used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with
a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

•533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh
534 duh drum.[33] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[26]
Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up
aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum,
an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die.
Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um
bread an coffee.[37b, 9]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh
796 preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[982] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax
fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted
road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm,
I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young
Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59]
Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop
yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus
be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin
by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks.
Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he
couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long
an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh
hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab
heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn
muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They
tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the
wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a
dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh
em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off
the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd.
People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum
wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They
gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of
em dies." [13]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right
796 down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession
mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way.
Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call
[783] that prayuh 'the matrinal.' "

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but
she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who
died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body
and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh
• [533] beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As
they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as
they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then
they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services
to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this
and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a
midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[46] They use a shahp knife

115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
764 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything
533 on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the
drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
(775) woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

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754 cunjuh wut is laid down fuh yuh an let yuh know wen somebody is aftuh yuh."[18a]

829 The midwife told us that she had recently returned to Harris Neck, after having lived for many years in Waycross. We asked her which community she preferred and she said, "I lak it in Waycross, missus. Duh two places jis ain nuttn lak. Tings is sho diffunt yuh. Duh folks jis dohn ack duh same. Yuh wouldn even know dey wuz human. Soon as I kin Ise goin back tuh Waycross. I jis dohn lak it heah."

533 202 The conversation turned to drums and in regard to this subject Rosa spoke up emphatically. "Yes'm, I membuh bout how some time back dey use tuh beat out messages on duh drum.[26] Dat wuz tuh let us know wen deah wuz tuh be a dance aw a frolic. Wen dey hab a dance obuh on St. Catherines, dey beat duh drum tuh tell us bout it. Duh soun would carry obuh duh watuh an we would heah it plain as anyting. Den duh folks heah beat duh drum tuh let em know bout it in udduh settlements."

533 764 The women also spoke of drums in connection with death customs. They told us that they were still beaten by those in the procession accompanying the body to the grave.[24]

764 "Ebrybody put duh hans on duh body tuh say goodbye,"[31] Rosa told us.

"Yuh speak tuh duh pusson, too, an tell um a las message," said Anna.

"Yuh put dishes an bottles an all duh pretty pieces wut dey lak on duh grabe.[47] Yuh alluz break deze tings fo yuh put um down."[47a]

We wanted to know the reason for doing this, for we had been informed on other occasions that it was done so that no one would be tempted to steal.

Rosa, however, stated an entirely different motive.

"Yuh break duh dishes so dat duh chain will be broke.
[761] Yuh see, duh one pusson is dead an ef yuh dohn break duh

764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab
one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh
ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say
a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact
that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh
duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins." [63]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest
festivals [38] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz
alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the
remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring
some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[782] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances
[536] call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of
115 Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping
[533] her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her
grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held
them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

"Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she
[763] wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

789 propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

[777] From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right."[39]

533 535 When we asked about the music played at dances and at church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music."[38]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

122 As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

574 606 Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben, who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

(789) This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away."[8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too,"[69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754
231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[13a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh
764 duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh
fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey
202 beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean
763 somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement
tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah."[26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former
(534) years. At various points large metal discs were hung on trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[21]

• [533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[24] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [28]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [38]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she
[782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes
[782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh
[783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [63]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us.
262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they
777

231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La
Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right
in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh
[533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set
[202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an
hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an
den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody
[782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh
fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come
[775] git it.[56, 58]

"In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people
533 tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom.
534 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic,
202 dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul
an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey
heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so
udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill
kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a
half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a
settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms.
"Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh
[292] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an
[783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we
795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long
796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi-
[782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh
preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-
[783]

795 796 783 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins Done Wash Away.*"

● (533) 231 754 There were several white chickens wandering about the yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keeping them was that they possessed the power to dig up conjure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Africans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of the things of which she had heard him speak.

829 "He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 782 829 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna. I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray. Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

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* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10] an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an (825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50] yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole (789) kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone." [50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uhrum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs 484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an 789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an 787 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

777 The subject of drums was then brought up.

•533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh 534 alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an (535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuhgedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up (281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight (237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis." She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use oak?

824 "No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it. It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll 535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace
115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in
[351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an
[567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us
[534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a
533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We

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764 * *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1938.*

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● 533
534 764 walks in a long line moanin an we beats duh drum all duh way." [24]

534 We inquired about the making of drums and the kinds of drums.

[237] "We makes drums out uh sheep hide but we gottuh dry um an stretch duh skin obuh. Some makes it out uh holluh lawgs wid skin obuh duh en an some ub um is as long as tree feet." [25]

567 We asked the old man if he remembered any slaves that were real Africans.

829 "Sho I membuhs lots ub um. Ain I sees plenty ub um? I membuhs one boatload uh seben aw eight wut come down frum Savannah. Dat wuz jis a lill befo duh waw. Robbie McQueen wuz African an Katie an ole man Jacob King, dey's all African. I membuhs um all. Ole man King he lib till he ole, lib till I hep bury um. But yuh caahn unduhstan much wut deze people say. Dey caahn unduhstan yo talk an you caahn unduhstan dey talk. Dey go 'quack, quack, quack,' jis as fas as a hawse kin run, an muh pa say, 'Ain no good tuh lissen tuh um.' Dey git long all right but yuh know dey wuz a lot ub um wut ain stay down yuh."

Did he mean the Ibos * on St. Simons who walked into the water?

"No, ma'am, I ain mean dem. Ain yuh heah bout um? Well, at dat time Mr. Blue he wuz duh obuhseeuh an Mr. Blue put um in duh fiel, but he couldn do nuttn wid um. Dey gabble, gabble, gabble, an nobody couldn unduhstan um an dey didn know how tuh wuk right. Mr. Blue he go down one mawnin wid a long whip fuh tuh whip um good."

"Mr. Blue was a hard overseer?" we asked.

567 829 "No, ma'am, he ain hahd, he jis caahn make um unduhstan. Dey's foolish actin. He got tuh whip um, Mr. Blue, he ain hab no choice. Anyways, he whip um good an dey

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789 * *A group of slaves from the Ibo tribe refused to submit to slavery. Led by their chief and singing tribal songs, they walked into the water and were drowned at a point on Dunbar Creek later named Ebo (Ibo) Landing.*

600 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
763 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat
202 two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks.
Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 25] Lots
534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
(237) skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz
tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It
wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum
twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high.
Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between
duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh
wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
783

SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through
the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an
easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing,
and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage
in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company
offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have
preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as
well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
(493) (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius
(412) we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic
(124) picture of survival elements that have persisted since the
days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new
country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate
XV),[*][B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of
Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas
Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her
small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
(123) head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to
conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco
and began to talk:

•533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um.
Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[38]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum,
rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin
plates.[22, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak
mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

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[*] *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*

A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

793 from the draught. This was Preacher Little who, we were
794 afterwards told, was an itinerant preacher, not a native to
[292] the island but a type native to the district.

796 His text, read in a loud, commanding voice, was "You ah
the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savory, where-
537 with shall it be salt; it is then no good and should be trompled
intuh earth." The exposition of this pronouncement was
awaited with breathless interest.

The sermon that followed, however, was in no way connected with the text. Preacher Little divided his sermon into three parts and lectured his congregation on "straying frum duh paat." What he said was not really coherent. Words stood out, phrases rang in our ears, quotations from the Bible resounded at random but that was the beginning and the end. The impelling element was the sound of Preacher Little's voice.

In each part he began slowly, quietly, persuading and rea-
796 soning with his congregation. His voice would carry a
786 pleading question to them and they would answer, "Huh."[29]
As he progressed, the quiet reasoning diminished; he shouted to his listeners. The "Huh—Huh's" became loud, guttural, vibrating grunts that echoed through the little building. Regular stamping of the feet began; the vibration penetrated into every corner. It was impossible not to think of the beating of the drum. The regular rhythmic, swelling noise was deafening. It meant agreement with Preacher Little. It urged him on to greater heights until his shouting voice not only seemed to fill the church but to reverberate from wall to wall. This climax was reached three times, at the end of each of the three parts of the sermon. Each time it seemed to act as a great emotional purge to the listeners and leave them happily exhausted.

796 When the sermon ended, spirituals were sung under the
able direction of a young Negro named George Smith.* The

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533 * *George Smith, Sapelo Island and Brunswick.*

796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
•533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised
heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland,
Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a
825 sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a
rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a
sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the
island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the
island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes'
belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its
825 place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the
islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all
796 night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings
tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree
an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle
chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey
829 trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey
567 git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny
wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em
tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he
(192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.'
He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout
em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle
line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we
534 use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum.
Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle
• 533 em an make good music." [23, 25]

We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope
- 535 and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody
knows it." [17]

754 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and
the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way
789 back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I
membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root
makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My
huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings
ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small
board house was set well back from the road. The front
(351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion
of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

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* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name
Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He
weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too
an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he
eyes.[37] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh
middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they
used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh
dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn
drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul.
I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does.
Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey
beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh
duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey
let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

567 "Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
782 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a
great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey
hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git
nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh
(795) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(783) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh
ribbuh.[63]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take
a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
(567) wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey
trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could
remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

"Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
759 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
754 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick
789 wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud
light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh
jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm
tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root
maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
534 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time.
535 Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance
roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good
drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
764 tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey
use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
(795) den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
(796)
(783)

533
795 candidates walkin in wite robes tuh duh ribbuh an duh
preachuh he dip em on duh ebb tide an he pray duh ribbuh
796 tuh take duh sin away.[63] Dey ain mine gittin wet in duh
783 ribbuh.

"Heahd bout duh Ibo's Landing? Das duh place weah
567 dey bring duh Ibos obuh in a slabe ship an wen dey git yuh,
829 dey ain lak it an so dey all staht singin an dey mahch right
down in duh ribbuh tuh mahch back tuh Africa, but dey ain
able tuh git deah. Dey gits drown."

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl.
Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat
with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an
talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns.
I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in
Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz
'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [79] bout lak
the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as
smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long
ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She
think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh
misplace it someway.

"Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation.
252 Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She
make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with
honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They
534 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats
•533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the
764 buryin groun.[24] Long then wen a pusson die they have a
settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still
764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the
782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an
leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle
754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh
231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo
than in the ole days." [15]
825

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked
115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his
gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the
past.

793 537 796 [871] Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhetorical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island ministers have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For example, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, masterfully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

[539]
Heavenly Father
Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

796 533 [793] [774] [786] Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing. It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives. Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit, which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services singing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

796 starts slowly and softly, gradually increasing in tempo while the shout-
●533 ers strive to keep up with it; it becomes louder and faster until they are
786 totally spent.

The call-and-response style is still the tradition of worship in Sea
796 Island churches, just as it is in most southern black churches. The
794 minister calls out a statement, and the congregation repeats it or gives a
rhythmic and raucous reply. Though many of the men act as responders
786 to the ministers, few shout or become "happy" as many of the women
do. However, those who do join in the movements of the shout do so
with considerable zeal. These frenzied shouts are related to the prac-
[171] tices of certain African religious cults.[55] In 1904 a woman wrote of her
encounters with the spirituals and shouts of the Sea Islands and asked
an inhabitant what explained them. The respondent replied that when
the preacher read from the Bible how those "dry bones ter lib ergin,"
something deep within her would come to life and she would begin to
holler and sing some old "shout" song from Africa.[56] I observed sim-
[171] ilar call-and-response services in Nigeria: though I could not always
understand what was being said in the language of the service, I found
that I could nevertheless join in singing the reply.

178 Today there are many customs and practices unique to the Sea Islands and to parts of Africa which offer investigators rich insights into African and African-American traditions. The Sea Island language and oral literature did not develop and survive apart from the social and cultural environment which produced them. The extended family household and the Sea Island burial customs, religious beliefs, and styles of worship are no less evidence of African roots and preservations than is the language itself. As long as these roots remain viable, the Sea Island people will maintain their cultural integrity; only when such traditional roots die will their culture die. I hope that an awareness of these influences upon the culture will aid in understanding the African influences upon the language and literature discussed in the following chapters.

538 Then members of the group may sit and tease each other for a while, telling jokes, playing the dozens, taking a little nip, or just sitting and [522] enjoying one another's company. When I was there, after the group had kidded around until everyone was laughing and in a fairly con- [123] genial mood, I was usually granted permission to turn the recorder on, and it was time to tell some tales.

With older storytellers, the sessions often begin with a song, re- ● [533] ligious or otherwise. During the singing, the members of the group join in enthusiastically, singing, clapping their hands, or swaying with the rhythm. After the song ends, the audience is usually ready to hear a good tale. Regardless of the ages of the members of the group, the most impressive stories are always told after the group has had a chance to talk, kid around, play the dozens, sing, or just be "sporty." The friendly teasing and cordial verbal exchange relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the listeners so that they will participate in the telling of the tales by responding to certain cues given by the performers.

A speaker may begin his tale by indicating that he is going to tell a story about Ber Rabbit. The audience (or a given respondent) may clap their hands, laugh, and rock back and forth to indicate their interest and repeat, "Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit!" This response demonstrates that the speaker has engaged their interest and attention and that they are now prepared to hear his tale. As the tale progresses, if the teller is entertaining and effective, the listeners will continue to respond to his every word, laughing and joking, clapping their hands, and urging him on with his tale. The audience is not a captive one; if the teller is not skilled in narrative technique, and his tale or delivery is uninteresting, then the listeners may wander away to get something to drink or talk to others and return only when a better speaker is talking. This response undoubtedly has an effect on the teller, who may try to hurry and finish his story so that someone else can have a turn.

Most audiences react to onomatopoeic words, repetitions, and chants. They respond as a chorus by repeating some of the speaker's words or phrases in unison or singularly. A practice very common both in Africa and on the Sea Islands is an interplay between the speaker and a given member of the audience. In an Igbo village, for example, [171] Raphael Amaugo often called on his friend Cornelius Onunwa to help him remember the details of a story that Raphael knew quite well. The

538 115 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the islanders. [991] Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers [994] and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to participate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and be- [996] come as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("ummmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 533 538 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

159 they give the audience an opportunity to become an active participant
533 in the telling event. Some Sea Island informants who knew many kinds
of tales often included songs and thus encouraged the audience to participate
538 in singing the chorus. Many of those who did not know the
words to the chorus participated by clapping their hands, patting their
feet, or humming along with those who were singing. The Sea Island
tales with songs were far more exciting in eliciting a wide response
from the audience than those without songs.

159 Though Miss Deeley is most noted for telling tales of bizarre happenings
and supernatural events, I found that the children who were
538 left in her care seemed to remember the words and melodies to the
songs in the tales much better than they remembered the unusual events
(see "The Three Pear[s]"). This woman's vast repertoire of tales, like
her knowledge about various medicinal cures, is perhaps a result of her
having given birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom are living. She
told me that telling them stories helped keep them occupied and out of
trouble. In addition, some of the older children used the same tales and
techniques to keep the younger ones amused. Now that most of her
own children are grown, she continues the storytelling tradition with
the grandchildren and great-grandchildren left in her care. Furthermore,
159 while she does indeed believe in modern medicine, she says she
finds that most of the ailments that she and her family have suffered
759 could be cured or helped by various roots that she found on the islands.
The most popular of these is the bloodroot, which when boiled makes a
reddish tea and is exceptionally good for high blood pressure. The
snakeroot, which must be boiled and permitted to stand or age with
good whiskey, is very useful for increasing the appetite and eliminating
constipation.

159 Though Miss Deeley would not consent to being recorded, she was
126 patient enough to permit me to take down one story ("The Three
538 Pear[s]") verbatim. This tale represents her language well.

Mr. Jonas Mickell became a close friend over a period of years,
159 and I am indebted much to him and his wife for the time and effort they
took to help contribute to this and other studies. Mr. Mickell is a well-respected
man in his community. He traveled much around the islands
by boat in his day and thus always had stories to tell of his adventures.
He is sixty or more years old and says that he was somewhat "sporty"
with the ladies before he was married, some forty years ago, to his

782 acquire the ability to join in the words of prayer, but only those who
537 have the gift can move the congregation to shout out a response.

None of the prayers are written, and herein lies much of their inventiveness. Many rival T. S. Eliot's *Wasteland* in elaborate allusions to works of literature. The most effective ones are alive with imagery, maxims, puns, understatements, and cultural references which the audience understands and responds to enthusiastically. More important, the prayers are filled with devices used judiciously throughout to induce the rhythmic incantation that is imperative to the Sea Island prayer tradition. Alliteration, transplacement, interplacement, epanaphora (repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive clauses), and other features create pleasing recurrent sounds which stir, stimulate, and evoke verbal responses from the audience. Epanaphoric passages—for example, "I want to be the child of God! / and I want my sins forgiven / I want my spirit meek and mild / and I want to go to Heaven when I die"—add to the beauty of the prayers and also demonstrate the speaker's skill as a rhetorician. The echoes of words and phrases in the
[539 audience's responses attest to the community's respect and admiration
for skillful and creative use of language:

Master, it's no lower *No! No lower!*
Could I come this evening
Excepting my knees are down at the floor *Floor! Cold floor!*
Guilty heart within
Crying guilty and already condemned *Condemned!*

Alliteration is used, as in "coax and call," "cold, cold hearts," and "Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove," to help establish the rhythm, as well as to contribute to the enthusiastic and energetic tone of the entire delivery.

The strong rhythm and chanted delivery of the prayers accords with
782 the prayer traditions of many African and African-derived cultures,
•533 including those of West Africa, the West Indies, and South America.
The rhythmic chants are crucial to the developmental flow of the
537 prayers.[2] Once the rhythm is established, it is maintained through various means, most important of which is the reply from the listeners. Some truly impressive prayer givers excite an audience to maximal response through their energetic diction and explosive tone alone. Others may intensify the rhythmic effect by drumming with a chair, tapping a cane against the floor, or just swaying back and forth in time to some inaudible sound.[3]

782 794 537 •533 It has been suggested that some respondents in African-American congregations may not understand or actually accept what the speaker says but respond instead to the highly contagious cadence established by the call from the speaker and response from the audience.[4] This observation may be justified in part: one may not be stimulated to respond to the message in the prayer, but it is difficult if not impossible to ignore the rhythm with which the prayer is delivered. Without a doubt, however, some congregants listen carefully to every detail—not only to receive the message but because, seeing that the prayers are not written, potential prayer givers must be attentive in order to learn the art of the prayer tradition.

782 537 Perpetuating this tradition is made easier by the formulaic element in their arrangement. They usually begin with a quotation from the Bible, a poem, or, more traditionally, some lines from the Lord's Prayer. The speaker usually has no prior knowledge that he will be asked to pray. Thus, the quotation gives him time to organize his thoughts and prepare himself to deliver an effective prayer. He is at liberty to alter a quotation to his own specification and often the alteration is more effective than the original. For example, the lines "For thine is the kingdom / The power and the glory" may be improved to "O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom / We expecting your kingdom to be / [a] poor sinner['s] glory!"

After the quotation, the speaker begins his personal prayer, a structured oration with a proem, line of appeal, and peroration. The proem opens with a rhetorical salutation to God commensurate with the solemnity of the occasion. It permits the speaker to express his humility as a servant of God, using such words as *mutable* and *impermanent*. The speaker does not presume to be as fortunate as the "foxes of the forest" or "the birds of the air." He projects himself as a mere waif
(539) asking for mercy with his knees bent in supplication:

Master Jesus, hear me
Another one of you[r] servant
Bow this evening, Jesus

Sin anguished and bended

. . . .

Crying to you this evening, Jesus
For Mercy

While mercy can reach [us]

782 eloquence and skill. Thus the speech is expected to be elevated and
195 elaborate while retaining certain syntactic and phonological features
[532] characteristic of the community language. Many prayers are composed
of hymns, Scriptures, spirituals, and traditional expressions, reflecting
[533] both biblical concepts and the black experience. Accordingly, the vocabulary, syntax, and phrasing do not necessarily represent those of the
person praying, but may be words and phrasing he has heard and
782 stored in his memory over the years. Again, the learned prayer givers
are most often those "gifted" in the art, with little formal training. The
537 important factors are that the person have a good memory, be able to
join beautifully constructed phrases together spontaneously, and be
able to establish a chanting rhythm which can be easily sustained by
the reply from the audience. While the text alone is intelligible on
paper, most of the beauty of the prayer escapes, along with the force of
the audience's reply and the increasing fervor of the speaker's call.

539 Opening Prayer for the Usher's Anniversary

[782] Mr. James Brown
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
13 July 1980

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, O Lord
Let thy holy and righteous
will be done on this earth
As you will was already done in heaven
Give us, Lord, this day
As our daily bread
You forgive those who have sin
And trespass against us *Amen*
Lead us not into sin, neither temptation
But, please deliver us from evil *Yes!*

O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom
We expecting your kingdom to be
[A] poor sinner['s] glory *Oh yeah!*

539 And then, Lord *Then Lord!*

I will go home and get
My just resolve[21] *Oh yeah!*

For all that I have done *Done!*

And then, Lord *My Lord*

Want you to meet me, Jesus
Somewhere, Lord, Job declare *Oh yeah!*

The wicked must cease in trouble *Trouble!*

And my soul have rest[22] *Rest*

'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

Amen. *Amen! Amen! Yeah! Yeah sir! All right!*

115 126 Mr. Mike Simmons was well into his nineties when Miss Myrna introduced me to him and his wife (he has since died). He sat in the doorway of his two-room shanty and tolerated a seven-day linguistic procedure. I collected a phoneme inventory from him by asking him to pronounce nearly three hundred words. The task is slow and exacting; sometimes his wife, in her late eighties, would call out from the kitchen and offer a variant way in which a word could be pronounced. This was a lovely couple.

[533] [782] When Mr. Mike tired of the procedure, he would look out over the grassy field in front of his home and begin to hum an old-time song, or he would begin to pray. When he did either of these things, it was my cue that he was tired and I should leave. The following is one of his short prayers.

The Lord's Prayer

539
(782) Most Revered Mr. Mike Simmons
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1976

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth as was done in heaven.
Give us this day, O daily bread
And forgive those who art in trespass against thee
O heavenly Father!
We are meeting on worldly soil today
Calling on your name
And, heavenly Father, couldn't do nothing until you come
Come now, Jesus, if you please?
The revered thanks to you today, heavenly Father
O Lord, if you please!
Look upon me in the eyes of pity
In the heart of compassion
I be so please, heavenly Father
O Lord, from last August, the single
They told us at least
O heavenly Father, you know when fall down, get up
Ben calling on your name
And I couldn't do nothing until de come!
Come now, heavenly Father, please, if you please

Amen!

115 782 533 Tom Mack is an active member of the Wadmalaw church community. He is a professional singer and is considered well on his way to perfecting the prayer-giving tradition. Though he is in his early forties, he is, according to the islanders, still experiencing the "scalding water" of life, one of the primary ingredients in learning to chant the words of the prayers with emotion. When he heard that I was writing a book, he came by to see me and offered the following prayer for me to complete.

Chapter 3

782 539 128 1. The prayers are often presented in a chanting style difficult for non-Gullah speakers to understand. Thus I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton of Wadmalaw Island for helping with transcriptions and translations.

113 2. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy;* Harold Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1976); William H. Pipes, *Say Amen Brother* (New York: William Federal Press, 1951); and Jones-Jackson, "Oral Tradition."

782 •533 3. The prayers are normally accompanied by music. If no musical accompanist is available, the prayer giver and the congregation create their own musical accompaniment with handclaps, shuffles, and moans.

113 4. See Carter, *Prayer Tradition;* Pipes, *Say Amen Brother;* and Molefe Asante, *African and African-American Communication Continuities* (New York: Council of International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975).

782 126 128 5. This prayer was delivered impromptu by Mr. James Brown, who is known for his ability to deliver stirring words with absolutely no prior preparation. I am grateful to him and Rev. Renty Pinckney for permitting me to record this prayer during church services. I am likewise grateful to Rev. Chester R. Jones for his comments on my analysis of the prayer. I owe special thanks to Rev. Alfred Owens of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, Washington, D.C., for his invaluable assistance in providing references for the many biblical allusions in the prayer. All references are to the King James Version.

000 6. Ps. 51, David's cry for repentance and mercy, may have been a model for this passage.

7. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.

8. Rom. 6:12, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53–54; John 15:1.

9. Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.

10. John 1:32.

11. Phil. 3:13.

12. Ps. 1:14.

13. John 12:2, 25:4.

14. 2 Cor. 7:5.

782 15. The speaker adapts his prayer to fit the occasion by including the purpose for which he is offering his prayer in strategic places. Many of the following passages are based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the speaker brings them into his prayer as responses (e.g., "Want my spirit meek and mild").

[793] 16. The minister is often considered the assembler and leader of the community as well as of the church. Thus, like Moses, he is viewed as a deliverer of the people, one chosen by God to be the inheritor of the silver trumpet. See Num. 10:1–10.

17. This is a rural expression of the idea from Matt. 7:24–29 that whosoever builds his house on solid rock shall not be moved by the storms of life.

18. Jerusalem is not only the holy biblical city but, literally, the name of the AME church in which this prayer was delivered.

175 567 197 capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary:

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

175 533 ● Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more (797) stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena:

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

114 The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the

and fields where rice was being cultivated. It was generally expected that deprivation of food and shelter would "occasion them to disperse about the country, and it is hoped will be the means of most of them being soon taken up."[21] 175

Discontented slaves engaged in various forms of violence against the white community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the city the most common act of resistance was setting fires. Numerous cases of arson were reported, and in 1797 three slaves were executed and two banished for attempting to burn Charleston. As historians who recognize the character of the African-American struggle have noted, the year 1800 was momentous. Gabriel's aborted uprising in Richmond, Virginia corresponded in time with the date of Denmark Vesey's purchase of freedom and Nat Turner's birth. Gabriel's attempt in 1800 may have inspired two failed South Carolina efforts later that same year. In September plantation slaves rebelled, killing several whites. Troops were ordered out but the insurgents held their ground for some time in the swamp regions before capture. Later in the year another outbreak began but was quickly dispersed. In 1804 in the Sea Island region south of Charleston, there was "a rumor afloat" that all slaves in the area were planning a revolt. Whites began taking guns to bed. The rumor was reportedly true and whites were saved by a slave informant just before the outbreak. The leaders were seized, quickly tried, and "ten or a dozen" condemned to death. Following execution, the slaves' "heads were cut off, stuck on poles, and set up along the highway, from Purrysburg, the place of the trial, to Coosawhatchie," the old Beaufort judicial seat. In 1805 news of a conspiracy in the up-country created panic and led to the death of at least one slave.[22] 175 567 669

Unrest in the Lowcountry continued, and was evident during the War of 1812 as well as afterwards. In this war between Britain and the fledgling nation, another overture to desert was made to the slaves of the southeast coast. Many responded and left with the British, 3,000 going to Nova Scotia. On one of the islands near Charleston, slaves in 1813 readied themselves for an anticipated British attack which would ignite a black insurrection. The gathering, in anticipation of the British and prospects of freedom, gave rise to a "freedom hymn." According to an informant, the hymn and account of its creation was given to him in 1835 by an English abolitionist-missionary, and was compiled by one of 175 (533) (539)

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 the leaders of the intended insurrection. The slaves held secret meetings
533 on one of the islands near Charleston and the "proceedings were opened
539 and closed by the singing of this "Hymn of Freedom":

Hail! all hail! ye Afric clan
Hail! ye oppressed, ye Afric band,
Who toil and sweat in Slavery bound;
(Repeated)

And when your health & strength are gone
Are left to hunger & to mourn.
Let *Independence* be your aim,
Ever mindful what 'tis worth.
Pledge your bodies for the prize
Pile them even to the skies!
Chorus
Firm, united let us be,
Resolved on death or liberty
As a band of Patriots joined
Peace & Plenty we shall find.

Look to Heaven with manly trust
And swear by Him that's always just
That no white foe with impious hand
(Repeated)

Shall slave your wives & daughters more
Or rob them of their virtue dear.
Be armed with valor firm & true,
Their hopes are fixed on Heaven & you
That truth & justice will prevail
And every scheme of bondage fail.
Chorus

Arise! Arise! shake off your chains
Your cause is just, so Heaven ordains
To you shall Freedom be proclaimed.
(Repeated)

Raise your arms & bare your breasts,
Almighty God will do the rest.
Blow the clarion! a warlike blast!
Call every Negro from his task!
Wrest the scourge from Buckra's hand,
And drive each tryant from the land.
Chorus

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 never get to heaven. Gullah soldiers sang a song about the black driver
567 during the Civil War. White witnesses thought the song appeared "quite
(533) secular in its character, yet its author called it a 'spiritual' ":
(539)

Fust ting my mammy tell me,
  O' gwine away!
Tell me bout de nigger-driver,
  O' gwine away!
Nigger-driver second debil. . . .

The relationship between the missionary's observation and the "spiritual" further illustrates how Gullahs viewed slave drivers. One driver, "noted as a good Negro, and a Methodist," had heard since his childhood that no driver could ever get to heaven, "and they need not try, for none . . . could see God's face in peace." The distraught man told a Methodist missionary, " 'to that tree every night I want to pray; at last God, for Christ sake, pardoned my sins.' " The black driver became fully convinced that " 'Christ is able to save a driver as well as anybody else.' " And he hoped, said the missionary, to hold out faithfully so that " 'people will see at least one driver in heaven.' "[39]

175 The type of bondage experienced by the Gullahs was related to the Lowcountry's settlement as well as the staple crops produced. The colony of Carolina was settled by West Indian planters who created a system of slavery notorious for maltreatment of black laborers. One individual, a German, traveling through the Carolina Lowcountry after the American Revolution, observed that:

> The condition of the Carolina negro slaves is in general harder and more troubulous . . . wretched food, more work, tedious work, harsh and cynical treatment at the hands of owners and overseers. There is less concern here as to their moral betterment . . . proof is in the fact that they do not multiply . . . numbers are refreshed thru importations.[40]

175 The continued harshness of the system was maintained. After indigo
567 cultivation, both South Carolina and Georgia became absorbed in cotton
248 culture. Although not as backbreaking as indigo, Sea Island cotton ex-
461 tracted a heavy toll from black workers in many ways. The staple needed a tremendous amount of labor and laborers, especially after 1820 when the international market value of fine cotton soared. On an average plantation, fifty to sixty days of labor per slave were required to produce one bale of fine Sea Island cotton. The crop required more hoeing than short-

17 797 These were golden opportunities for the missionary. The entire plantation gathered to see a body laid to rest in "its narrow house." The preacher first consoled the sorrowful widow, bidding her to trust God, "the husband of the widow and father of the fatherless." He then addressed the dead man's fellow servants on the necessity of preparing for death: "In a word I preached Jesus and the resurrection, and by the glimmering of the lightwood fire, was the burial service read and the body committed to the dust." Upon leaving the plantation late that night, the missionary was moved by thoughts which were probably not very different from thoughts which the slaves who had just witnessed the burial might have, "thoughts on life, on life's duties, on life's end: of the wants and woes of the world."[62]

Once again the missionary capitalized on an opportunity to involve himself in the black community and the slaves' experience. His efforts to share in and add meaning to life and death among the bondspeople helped make him a presence in the quarters even if he came but twice a month. He was, for his caring, often looked upon fondly. Although the missionary represented the same forces of oppression as did the master, the slaves perceived the spiritual arm of the dominant society as perhaps its one redeeming quality, a contradiction to serve the slaves' interests. Still the fondness was more on an individual level. A well-meaning Methodist like Chreitzberg was accepted though all he preached and taught was not. From the slaves' vantage point it was unwise to completely relinquish that which had previously provided spiritual solace and replace it with something new and as yet untried. For missionaries able to secure access to plantations, spiritual rewards might be inspiring if short-lived. Through catechism, "class meeting," and carrying out of pastoral duties, Methodists experienced some triumphs for Christianity. Missionaries never succeeded in dethroning black leadership and felt that this influence continually created obstacles to Christian conversion.[63] Nevertheless, Methodists proved to be relentless in the dissemination of their doctrines. As Gullahs grew more attentive to the preachers' words, they discarded the incongruous and discordant features of the instruction and fashioned the religion of slaveholders into something peculiarly their own.

17 797 533 One of the most significant effects that Methodism had on Gullahs was in the creation of the religious music of these slaves. Some scholars argue that the actual source of Gullah religious songs can be traced to Methodist hymns and tunes sung at camp meetings. Certainly Methodist

17 797 533

hymns were adopted by the Gullahs and other slaves. Francis Asbury traveled the seacoasts of Georgia and South Carolina frequently. While he gained few white converts, he was impressed with the black response to his preaching. During the Civil War, musicologists and others, fascinated by Gullah songs, noted that what was sometimes called a "Negro song," was of white origin, especially the so-called religious songs. But to these white melodies, the Gullahs added their own "spirit and relish," giving a "peculiar individuality and nationality" to the music. Thus it is pointless and probably inaccurate to insist that whites and blacks did not create sacred music together when they worshipped together. Such was the case at camp meetings and revivals. Still these gatherings were not as common in the Lowcountry as they were elsewhere. Some writers argue that the camp meeting was distinctly a pineland and upcountry institution. Although evidence indicates that a few camp meetings were held in the rice communities—the hinterlands of the Sea Islands—we find no record of its presence on any of the Islands. The influence of the domestic slave trade, black-white cultural borrowing, and diffusion were all factors in the creation and development of African-American music. Nevertheless, a unique continuity in religious songs can be found in the Sea Islands and coastal lowlands. There were indeed two types of religious music among the Gullahs who adopted Christianity: those songs and hymns learned from white religious instructors and mainly Methodist in origin, and those representing the product of the Gullah's own creativity and imagination, generally referred to as spirituals or prayer songs.[64]

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The primary influence of Methodist preachers on the development of spirituals was in providing Gullahs with raw material for their songs. From past spiritual traditions these African-Americans inherited a mysticism, sense of drama, and creative antecedents that aided them in expressing and interpreting through song the apocalyptic and miraculous elements of biblical narration already rich in symbolic imagery. Also, New Testament biblical lore was not unlike the Gullahs' own oppression and suffering. From the Sea Islands in 1843, A. M. Chreitzberg provides examples of the spontaneous creation of spirituals. In delivering his message, the missionary enforced the concepts of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." At the conclusion of the meeting, the group was "much affected" by a "soft female voice" singing: [539]

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Dis berry same Jesus, dis berry same Jesus,
We heares dese people de talk about;
Dis berry same Jesus . . .

[539) Chreitzberg finished his labors and headed back to Beaufort by boat. Undoubtedly the black boatmen had heard his sermon. It was a dark night and the effect of the scene was heightened by "one of those thundergusts, so frequent in our latitudes." Chreitzberg and his associate sat at the stern of the boat, comfortably "gazing at the clouds." The lightening gleamed in the distance, "with the sullen roll of the distant thunder":

> We were sitting at ease in the stern of the boat, suddenly a sound struck upon our ear, that we can liken to nothing save the shriek of a lost spirit. This we found to be the chorus of a song the boat hands were preparing to sing, the chorus we cannot write; it was something between a groan and the cry,—"have mercy"; and was sung at the end of every line.

[539)

O Lord, O Lord! what shall we do?
What shall we do, what shall we do?
What shall we do for a hiding place;
No hiding place for sinner here.
We run to de sea—de sea run dry;
We run to de rock—de rock da sink;
We run to de tree—de tree ketch fire;
We run to de grave—de grave bus open;
We run to de door—de door shut close;
We wring we hands, we grine we feet,
We cry O Lord, O Lord, O Lord,
No hidin' place for sinner here!

> The words written, may only serve to excite a smile, but when sung, the effect is directly the reverse; as in the intensity of excitement, one holds his breath to catch every intonation of the voice; he will, in spite of himself, be affected to tears.[65]

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The Gullahs sense of their own human frailty was expressed in their spirituals. Illness, floggings, fatigue from overwork, and the ubiquity of death were features of daily existence. The harsh Sea Island bondage must have contributed to a longing for a better world at best or for another one at the very least. For some slaves an eternal reward would justify a life that was often painful and joyless yet not without hope. Some conscious rationale regarding a future being might ease a portion of the strong sense of injustice felt toward the present, and fill gaps left

by features of traditional African religion and philosophy not transfera- 175
ble or appliable to the New World situation. In this way the Gullahs 567
gradually developed a holistic religion with components of both experi- 771
ences. The helplessnss implicit in the Christian motif was a central in-
gredient of Methodist teaching. But one need not seek an explanation for
identification with Christianity in Methodism alone, with its prostrating
sense of fatalism. Aside from biblical example, and need for a complete
world view, the Gullahs' own ill-fated lives and the frequent occurrence
of untimely deaths were often sufficient to bring forth the poetry from
within. The following Sea Island torchlight burial is an example of the 175
kind of tragic scene that might well motivate the creation of a spiritual: 764

> On one occasion of burial, I have reason to believe much good was done. A woman, who was a member of the Church, and who had died in full hope of immortal life, was to be buried at night, it being the most convenient time for the people to be together. Accordingly I met the people at the time appointed. The plantation being large, many were present. The corpse was conveyed about a quarter of a mile to the burial ground, the procession moving slowly and silently along, with lighted torches interspersed through the ranks. This presented a solemn scene; but after we arrived at the burying place it was still more solemn. A grove standing in the midst of a large clearing, which had been sacredly kept for years as belonging to the dead, undisturbed even by the footsteps of man, except when another was to be laid in the earth, and under the shade of the cedars. Here we all met in the midst of the grove, around the grave. It was a dark night, but in the midst of the grove it was still more dark. All was silent, except the thrilling note of the whippoorwill, who had made this lonely retreat its home; all around us lay the graves of the dead of all sizes. The reflection from many torches presented them full in view in every direction, as though they had but just been closed; so thick was the shade above that no grass grew on that spot. I have attended many of my fellow beings to the grave; but never did I witness a more solemn time, and yet I felt it a blessed time. I felt it a duty to try and improve the occasion of our being together; and indeed it was a time of weeping—some of the most stubborn were melted into tears. The husband of the deceased and her infant child were near the grave; he, before a careless man, now wept aloud—and since that period has shown his grief was not of a worldly kind; he has offered himself to the Church, and his child he has had baptized. Many others on the plantation have become serious, and are now on trial.[66]

The spectacle of this young woman's funeral and the presence of the (771)
white missionary preaching the prospect of life after death aroused thoughts
of the finality of human life and generated desires to transcend reality
and be projected into a peaceful future existence. More than likely a (533)

175 764 533 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poignant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volunteers. He considered it "the most poetic of all their songs."

(539)

> I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
> Lay dis body down.
> I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
> To lay dis body down.
> I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
> To lay dis body down.
> I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
> Lay dis body down.
> I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
> When I lay dis body down.
> And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
> When I lay dis body down.[67]

175 771 797 567 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubtedly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quickened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

17 bility of such an accomplishment, an intense love of family and deep
567 attachments to familiar surroundings kept runaways nearby. Perhaps even
more than any other slaves in the United States, Gullahs maintained a
181 clan-type kinship community, and in their isolation clung tenaciously to
these relationships. This attitude was also expressed toward their plantations.
Those Gullahs able to purchase small twenty-acre plots of land
during the Port Royal experiment, resisted buying on any plantation
other than their "own." They thought "it was as bad as slavery if they
had to leave their old homes." Yet as slaves, Gullahs ran away frequently
and bad treatment was the leading cause for absence. Treatment was also
17 a recurring theme in Gullah songs, as indicated by this slave worksong
567 related by Sam Polite:

> ● 533 I wuk in field on Maussa Johnnie Fripp plantation. Sometime we sing w'en we
> (539) wuk. One song we sing ben go lak dis:
>
> "Go way, Ole Man
> Go way, Ole Man
> W'ere you bin all day
> If you treat me good
> I'll stay 'till de Judgment day,
> But if you treat me bad,
> I'll sho' to run away."[58]

17 Not all masters were cruel. For example, the Gullahs represented "Capt.
567 John" Fripp as a kind man. Still, his "whipping post" was within twenty
feet of the "drawing-room." The tree, "a sprawling Asia-berry," covered
with grey moss, "looked wiered enough." "Capt. John" reportedly never
"licked" hard nor struck "in the same place twice." Fripp's houseman,
Dick, only recalled getting one "hard" flogging, when he watered the old
man's garden with seawater. However, his wife, the cruel one, liked "to
stand at the window to see the floggings," administered by "Driver
Moody," when "Capt. John" was away. Thomas Chaplin of Tombee
Plantation was tough enough, and threatened his slaves a great deal. He
was also an insensitive master in regard to selling slaves, unable to believe
blacks had the same familial loyalty as white people. He wrote in
his Journal, "cowhide was all talk with me." But one must take such a
comment skeptically since he frequently had his drivers do the flogging.
Chaplin was not remembered by his slaves for excessive cruelty nor for
kindness.[59]

Rarely could a Sea Island slave boast, as one did, that their backs "stan

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175 how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the
771 Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "Gen-
eral Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the De-
797 partment of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."'[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school
● (533) children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following:
(539)

Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
O Lord, yes my Lord

....

In de mornin' when I rise,
Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .

....

I would not let you go, my Lord,
I would not let you go,

....

I can't stay behin' my Lord,
I can't stay behin'[4]

175 Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their
attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude to-
771 ward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood
779 the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a
joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh
795 meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

> I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

dition to Florida, one of the black preacher's exhortations was reportedly 17
"worthy of a place in 'American Oratory.'" He urged the men to seek 701
the post of danger and fight bravely. "He who is de fust man to get on de boat," he rallied, "and de fust to jump on shore, him, if he fall, will be de fust to get in heaben." Then, as if himself in the midst of battle, and aroused by the occasion, he added fervently:

> 'An' when do battle comes—when you see de Kunn'l put his shoulder to de wheel, and hear de shot and shell flying all around like de rain drops, den remember dat ebery one ob dose shot is a bolt of de Almighty God to send dem rebels to deir eberlasting damnation.[14]

Sacrifices for freedom were not only made by Gullah soldiers, for the 17
war effort was a community enterprise. The men's absence from the 722
plantations placed the burden of breadwinning solely on the women, who shouldered it admirably. Gullah men had at first objected to the women working in the fields because this labor had taken such a heavy toll on female health. But women insisted on working "fur pay," and did so "with a will," sometimes working two tasks in one day. Thus, while the men went off to fight or to work as laborers for the army, field work continued. Women, boys, and girls worked side by side, planting, hoeing, picking, sorting, ginning, and packing the cotton. They also raised vegetables and poultry for consumption and to sell. The women were ambitious and disciplined, laboring with "tireless energy" when working for themselves and their families. Sometimes they even managed to attend newly established schools in order to "catch a lesson." As a way of further supporting loved ones away with the regiment and the army, the women wrote letters. Many of the Northern women's "spare time" was spent writing words of love and encouragement dictated by the freedwomen.[17] It was a period of optimism, when social relations knitted over generations proved tenacious and steady. This was also a time when the faith of the bondspeople seemed to bear fruit.

The subject of freedom was often symbolically and thematically ex- 17
pressed in Gullah spirituals. While these "prayer songs" appear to be a 533
portent of the future in a Christian context, they contain ambiguity that implies otherwise. Double meanings and surrogates abounded, and
Gullah spirituals could often be interpreted in several ways. For ex- (539)
ample:

17 •533 (539)

Jesus make de blind see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hinder me.[18]

175 533 771 When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep, sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the 175 701 533 song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of con- 175 181 701 533 descension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists. Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and cooiness in combat, thus affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that 175 533 186 their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we" for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had developed over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

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merged under slavery and created one people with common interests, ambitions, beliefs, and sense of oppression. 175 533•

The Gullahs' Marseillaise was the exhilarating spiritual "New Jerusalem": (186) [539)

De Talles' tree in Paradise
De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
an' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my new Jerusalem!

Blow Gabriel! Trumpet, blow louder, louder!
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem!

Paul and Silas jail-bound
Sing God's praise both night and day,
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem![21]

This favorite "shout" song of the Gullahs was triumphant rather than tragic. Thus it was not one of those to be sung with a "heavy heart" or a "troubled speerit." "New Jerusalem" was an uplifting, infectious tune. Its symbolic range could harmonize with a number of situations, circumstances, and experiences. When freedman Maurice, who had been blinded by his master in a fit of rage, sang "New Jerusalem" at the Praise House, his mind turned toward heaven and the prospect of gaining his sight in a future world. But when the freedpeople sang "New Jerusalem" at the Emancipation Jubilee on New Year's Day in 1866, it was their earthly future and enthusiasm for their long-awaited freedom that filled their thoughts and expectations. The tree of life was the tree of liberty, as paradise was a land free of bondage. The meaning behind this spiritual was not lost on Northern teacher Elizabeth Botume: 175 527 533

> The streets of the city were filled with happy freed people. According to their spiritual, they had "fought for liberty," and this was their "New Jerusalem,"of which they so often sang. Even the poorest, and those most scantily clothed, looked as if they already "walked that golden street," and felt "that starry crown" upon their uncovered heads. It was indeed a day of great rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. These people were living their "New Jerusalem."[22]

Spirituals sung during the Civil War attest to Gullah creativity and further demonstrate that the desire for freedom was as strong a motivation as relgious piety. Songs such as the following grew out of the war years: 175 533 539

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We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
When de Lord will call us home.

My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
'Fore we done suffrin' here?

It won't be long (thrice)
'Fore de Lord will call us home.[23]

[567] Slaves in Georgetown were jailed at the outbreak of the war for singing this spiritual. As a little drummer boy explained to Higginson, "Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say de Yankees." Higginson doubted that the slaves made the same association of which their masters thought them capable. Once again he reveals his nineteenth-century "romantic racialism." But no one could mistake the plaintive meaning in the following song, first heard at Hilton Head Island and said to have been a song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise":

No more peck o' corn for me,
No more, no more,
No more peck o' corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more driver's lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more pint o' salt for me,
No more, etc.

No more hundred lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more mistress' call for me,
. . . .
Many tousand go.[24]

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Thus, while God, personified as Jesus, offered Gullahs an explanation for life and provided a model of virtue, as did their African God, this was not an abjuration of human existence. Their religion contained a

middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The 175 567
first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless- 36
appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it [346]
low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to
be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as [202)
well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people
on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, al- 175
though a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene: 794

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect 346
> the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves 175
a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations 794
of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs
a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering 346
and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At 567
the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what 368
they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary
to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning
the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious ex- [795]
perience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership
doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended
for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual har- 175
mony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town 567
hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and
exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern ob- 368
server very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862: [533)

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

175 it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a
567 hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de
368 praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist
[533] church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation
[795] and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House
whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white
Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the
war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power
on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs
continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves
according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew,
175 through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to
567 scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely
794 religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and
members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having
the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right."
Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church
disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise
House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their
own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued
effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and
[674] the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited
for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the
794 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs
law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more
621 than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for
harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed
Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise
[626] House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force
has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these
[368] plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but
they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth
among the Gullahs.

805 Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had
794 sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them
during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term
175 still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person
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> At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." [154] Thus, the shout ritual, among other things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner.

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, ● [533] while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38]

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Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

> . . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . 175
impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the 567
wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered
around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be 796
controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and 786
over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light 535
around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts
of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, 533
not soon to be forgotten.[39]

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to 175
participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was per- 794
formed until they became Praise House members. Once membership 796
was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by (869)
the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the 175
shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They 796
call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an al- 175
tered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It 796
represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an 786
outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced 787
the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

000 African initiation, beginning with a symbolic death, a journey to the spirit world, and complete rupture with one's past life and personality, was a time of lethargy, isolation, and prostration. As a result of contact with the spirits (nameless objects or ancestors) while in the bush, the novice's personality was modified in the image of a deity, and the individual was said to have become godlike through association—hence the Mano term "little spirits of the bush." Spirit possession took place during bush-life, itself represented as a period of unconsciousness when the initiate departed the domain of reason. The neophyte emerged from the experience "reborn," with a secondary spiritual personality inculcated as a type of conditioned reflex. When cultural and environmental forces interacted with these individual personalities from similar traditions, a psychological, collective process that was rarely conscious could be stimulated. The baptism or "sacred bath" purged the initiate's mind of previous attitudes, and future behavior would be an emulation of the true spirit within, or "little me."[43] Hence possession behavior can be interpreted as part of a society's efforts to incorporate into a coherent system the natural and supernatural worlds. Since possession was a public ceremony, where one demonstrated his or her individual spiritual presence in a sharing experiental manner, the phenomenon can be seen as solidifying human collectivity and providing a further basis for the participants to create a socioreligious network of communication and interaction. In the following description of a shout recorded more than fifty
796 years after slavery, it illustrates possession in full force among Sea Island
786 blacks, and suggests how certain African religious cult themes could have
been retained. This shout, in a St. Helena Island Praise House, involved
787 "welcoming and initiating" three teenage boys baptized into the church
794 that morning. The Praise House leader announced that, "After givin' de
right han' of fellowship to dese t'ree boys," the benediction would take
[795] place, after which "we'll gib dese boys de opportunity to exercise deyselbes wid de shout." The new converts were allowed to begin and demonstrate their ability to "exercise deyselbes." As people pushed back the benches, there was laughter and conversation as the shout began. The
three youths stamped the floor, clapped their hands rhythmically, and
● [533] moved around and around the open space in the center of the floor,
"which was walled in by encouraging older people and other young people, all singing "De bell dun rung." The people commented on the shouters, such expressions as "Yoner look at Johnny, he exercise fur tru enty?"

or “Com' on, let's git indey widdem.” The others joined in, now paying 796
little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer 786
leading the shout, were “determined boys in their teens,” and seemed 787
bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, 794
and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters: 533 ●

> Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing “De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung.” Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to “cool off” and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, “De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung,” which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to “git in dey widdem.”[44]

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling 154
contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the par- 796
ticipants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and
a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account 175
of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations pro- 796
vides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs: 567

> The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

CHAPTER 10

Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural

000 "En when I trabbles de deep woods, whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl en de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.

> Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulpher. Dey es say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. . . . So I totes meh powder en sulpher en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd."*

761 Gullah's attached a tremendous significance to death, but there was little
evidence of apprehension at the prospect of dying. Slaves lived in the
presence of death so constantly that they seemed to consider the phe-
nomenon as much a part of living as was their continuous labor. That
they often reflected on the subject is evident in their spirituals. Yet these
(533) songs do not indicate that Gullahs thought of death with fear, forebod-
(157) ing, or morbidity. Perhaps it was partly this stoicism in the face of earthly
demise that some observers viewed as resignation or the effects[4] of de-
moralization. All African ethnic groups believed in life beyond physical
761 death. Possibly Gullahs retained the West African bush-initiation expe-
775 rience in their attitude toward death. This idea of a symbolic journey to
(171) the world of the dead and a triumphant return might explain the Gul-
lahs' ability to transcend feelings of dread about death and to disavow its
000 ultimate power over them. But perhaps an equally strong influence was
the BaKongo, since these societies had the most elaborate afterlife be-
liefs. The BaKongo four moments of the sun, as previously discussed,

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*"Truss Gawd." South Carolina Folklore Project #1655, D-4-33, WPA, SCL.

implies that earthly death is the setting of the sun, or the third moment. 000
Death was not the end of life, nor the cemetery a final resting place, but a door *(mwelo)* between two worlds. The fourth moment is midnight on earth when the sun is shining on the world of the dead. Here rebirth takes place. In any case, no matter what the unconscious motivation, what many considered to be a weakness among these bondspeople was actually a source of strength. They overcame a fear of death in light of the reality of its dominant presence among them, and through their realization that they, more so than most people, were often powerless to alter its course. Thus, while Gullahs did not shirk from death, they were 761
sensitive to the degree to which their lives were exploited, and aware that oppression often caused an untimely end to life. 533 The depth of their understanding of their position was sometimes grippingly demonstrated. Teacher William Allen was struck by how much the children sang of pain and death. Little "Margaret" came to the well to draw her pail of water. Putting it on her head, she walked off singing "shall I die—shall I die." She was followed by Tom and Abraham "galloping along on bamboo horses and shouting, 'my body rock 'long feber.' " Charlotte Forten was much affected by one of the hymns which she heard Gullah [539)
children singing:

I wonder where my mudder gone;
  Sing, O graveyard!
Graveyard ought to know me;
  Ring, Jerusalem!
Grass grow in de graveyard;
  Sing, O graveyard!
Graveyard ought to know me;
  Ring, Jerusalem!

> It is impossible to give any idea of the deep pathos of the refrain,—
> "Sing, O Graveyard."[1]

The pathos is there certainly, but the sense of hope, so characteristic of the Gullahs, is also present in the words "Grass grow in de graveyard." This could indicate that, in the BaKongo tradition, although there was death, there was also life and rebirth. The refrain "Graveyard ought (787)
to know me" might refer to the slaves' previous journey to the world of [567]
the dead as "seekers." The phrase could also recognize the omnipresence of death among the slaves.

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Another spiritual expressed a sense of optimism and a superior attitude toward death:

O Massa Death,
He's a very little man,
He goes from door to door;
He kills some souls,
and he woundeth some.
Good Lord remember me;
Good Lord remember me;
Remember me as the years roll round,
Good Lord, remember me.[2]

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In Christian belief the finality of death was often negated. One of the most appealing aspects of Christianity for Gullahs was the expectation of a better life after death. This afterlife was not visualized in the African sense, that an individual's status would not differ from one's mortal position. Instead, Gullahs strongly adopted the Christian concept of heaven, where all "true believers" would sit on "Christ's right side." For obvious reasons, this was one of the tenets of Christianity they most cherished.[3] While their African world view encouraged Gullahs to take a rich, positive attitude toward life, through Christian influence they expected a better life as payment for their suffering. As one person expressed it:

> De harder me cross to bear down here de better I go be prepare to tek me place in dat Happy Land where all is 'joicin, an' when I git dere, I want de Lord to say, "Ophelia . . . come an' rest wid de elect ob de Lord!"[4]

There was little in Gullah prayers or songs to indicate they feared the tribunal expected to reward the "faithful" and damn the "sinners." Thus they disregarded that portion of their religious instruction which strenuously emphasized a judgment day where "every theft or falsehood" would be brought to light and held against them. What was more important to the Gullahs was a change in their conditions. Just as Baptist slavemaster Daniel Pope queried Marcus, the Praise House elder, as to whether the Gullahs really believed Christ wanted "black nigger in heben," so were slaves convinced that the "Kingdom of God" would have almost no white subjects. Gullah Christianity was one of recompense. Slaves accepted the Christian doctrine of eternal life but modified it so that heaven was an exclusive place, primarily available to sufferers of the right hue as expressed by a former slave:

000 and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased might bring *kinduki* (evil).[12]

567 763 A curious example of the application of both African and Christian practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. [754] The slaves on the surrounding plantations were sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. [759] The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated the young woman. 567 764 But Mary died, and, according to the author, her funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved ●[533] slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."
>
> [789] Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to another across the coffin. [775] The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.
>
> [533] After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

> . . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

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The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the BaKongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[11]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " (754) (755) A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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APPENDIX D

The Deity

776 The Gullahs' concept of the deity was not that of a God of wrath, but
one of love and mercy. In Gullah music, phrases such as "Kind Jesus,"
● [533] or "In the mornin' when I rise, tell my Jesus Huddy ho," indicate that
for these slaves Christ was a warm personal friend, as well as a fellow
sufferer. Similarly, the Gullahs' prayers also express how they viewed
776 their relationship with God. Prayer was considered actual communication
782 with Jesus, and He was expected to listen and hopefully answer the
appeal in some way or another. In such verbal expressions the supplicator reveals inner ideas of the deity. In a study done among the Gullahs in the 1930s, it was observed that by far the most prominent attribute of the deity in prayers was merciful, being mentioned 189 times as opposed to a total of 119 times for all the other attributes ranging from loving to glorious. No description suggesting wrath or vengeance was among the characteristics attributed to the deity.[1] In the following prayer, recorded during the Civil War, one is able to observe the Gullahs' poetic imagery, spirituality, sense of community, and their attitude toward the deity:

782 *Aunt Jane's Prayer*

Der Maussuh Jesus, we all uns beg Ooner (you) come make us a call dis yere
539 day. We is nuttin' but poor Etiopian women and people ain't t'ink much 'bout
776 we. We ain't trust ask any of dem great high people for come to we church, but
do' you is de one great Maussuh, great too much dan Maussuh Linkum, you
ain't shame to care for we African people.

Come to we, dear Maussuh Jesus. De sun, he hot too much, de road am dat long and boggy (sandy) and we ain't got no buggy, for send and fetch Ooner. But Maussuh, yo' 'member how yo' walked dat hard walk up Calvary and ain't

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"En dat Plat Eye ain gib me back meh word. He mobe forward en he tail swish en swish same lak big moccasin tail when he lash de rushes. En de sound come to me; 'Child ob Gawd, doan you show no fear.'

"En I is brace up. En meh short-handle leetle clamrake been in meh hand en I sing:

'Gawd will take care ob me.
Walkin t'ru many ob dangers,
Gawd will take care ob me.'

"En den de min come ter me; 'De Lawd heps dem what heps demsef.' Den I raise up meh rake en I come right cross dat critter hed. Ef dat had bin real cat, I'd er pin him ter dat lawg. My rake bin bury deep en de lawg hold em. En I clare ter Gawd, Miss Jin, he up en prance right onder meh feets, dem eyes burnin holes in me en he tail swish-swish lak ole Sooky tail when de flies bad. En meh ire bin raise. I fer struggle wid meh rake en de lawg loose em he grip en I fer pray: 'Gib Addie Strength, O Gawd!'

"En down I come straight t'ru dat critter middle. He stummick ball up same lak de leetle puffer toad-fish. But dat critter ain feel meh lick. En I ressel lak Jacob wid de angel. I bin strong en hab meh bloom on me. It ain 'vail nuttin.

"No, man! Mr. Plat Eye jest es peart en frisky ez fore he bin hit. En I buse em en I cuss em en I say: 'You debbil! Clare meh path!'

"En ef dat critter didn't paw de air en jest raise up dat big bamboo vine, en meh fer hit em ebery jump! So, Miss Jin, I tink: 'Sinner leble dat lawg.' Meh mind come ter me: 'Child ob Gawd, trabbel de woods path!'

"En I turn back en meh haste. En I hit dat path. En I ain bin tarry en jest ez I wuz gibbin Gawd he praise fer deliver me, dere dat cat! Dis time he big ez meh middle-size ox, en he eye bin blaze! En I lam en I lam. En dat rake handle bin wire en bin nail on. En jest ez I mek meh las lam, dat critter raise up fore meh eyes, en dis time he bin big ez cousin Andrew full-grown ox. En he vanish up dat ole boxed pine ez you quits de woods. Yas'm. I ain bleeve in Plat Eye twill den, but I minds meh step since dem days.

"En when I trabbles de deep woods whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl in de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.

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Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Eddings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wabash* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

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48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

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50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6; ield to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

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56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Missions* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14–15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

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61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

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64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who argues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

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the known campgrounds by name, location, and dates of their existence. Crum, *Gullah*, 151. According to Crum, W. A. Massebeau in *Camp Meetings in South Carolina* (1919) records the names of 50 campgrounds. Of these, only one, Black Swamp, is south of Charleston. Black Swamp was in the Beaufort District and is close to Savannah. The area experienced its religious revival in the 1830s; Capers, *Catechism*, 14–16; *SCA*, June 30, 1843, July 14, 1843, December 29, 1843, January 12, 1849; John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864, W. Athorp to Mrs. Wendell P. Garrison, April 20, 1867 Antislavery Papers; Allen Diary, 18–19, 127–28, 164; Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *St. Helena Spirituals* (New York: G. Schirmer Press, 1925), Introduction and Foreword; Higginson, *Army Life*, 187–88; Crum, *Gullah*, 132–34.

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65. *SCA*, December 29, 1843.

66. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837.

67. Higginson, *Army Life*, 71–72.

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68. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 69–80; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; Fripp Diary, 60.

69. *CAJ*, September 7, 1833, November 7, 1834; *SCA*, September 15, 1843, September 6, 1850; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 367–68.

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70. "Report of Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 13, 1847, 11, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843.

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71. Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 186–95; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), Chapters 2, 3, 5, and especially 7; Views on the "spirit" versus the "letter" of Christian doctrine are based on Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter 2, ii, "The Moral Teaching of Jesus, (a) The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics": iv, "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; E. J. Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1963), Intro., especially Chapters 1–3.

72. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 40–41; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72.

7. To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861

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1. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 49; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 146–47; *CAJ*, June 20, 1834; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd. ser., no. 4 (October, 1986); 594–95; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152–57; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 4–6, 79; David Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848 repr. from 1813 ed.), 701–3; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964) 212–14; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church in South Carolina, 1663–1833* (Baltimore: R. H. Wooland, 1899), 224–25; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Ver-

17 15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–
113 105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963):
202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

[701] 16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto,"
196.

[722] 17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

● [533] 18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

20. Higginson, *Army Life*, 192; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.) 257–60.

21. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Allen Diary, 164.

22. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204.

23. Higginson, *Army Life*, 208.

24. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm*, 257–60 For an enlightening and provoking treatment of "romantic racialism" see George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), Chapter 4; William Francis Allen, Charles P. Ware, and Lucy M. Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.), 48; Higginson, *Army Life*, 208–9.

25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 235.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

[794] 1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale Univer-
[346] sity Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

[795] 2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

[368] 3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for
[533] Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the Untied States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

PREFACE

000

> The future of American Negroes is in the South. Here they have made their greatest contribution to American culture; and here they have suffered the damnation of slavery, the frustration of reconstruction and the lynching of emancipation. . . . Here is the magnificent climate; here is the fruitful earth under the beauty of the Southern sun; and here, if anywhere on earth, is the need of the thinker, the worker, and the dreamer. This is the firing line.
>
> *W. E. B. DuBois, speech at Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina, October 20, 1946*

177 THE TRAFFIC on River Road is heavy. When I first came to this part of Johns Island in 1964, it was a quiet rural black community. Now expensive cars cruise past on their way to Kiawah and Seabrook islands. These resort islands can only be reached by driving across Johns Island and meeting the approval of a guard at a security gate. Beyond the guarded gates are plush hotels and upscale shopping facilities, beachfront houses and condominiums. Those who are waved through the checkpoint are mainly affluent visitors from afar.

794
● 533 The traditional and the modern coexist eerily on Johns Island now. I notice the incongruity at once in Wesley United Methodist Church. I sit in its elegant pews and listen to the organist and the robed choir perform staid hymns from the Methodist hymnal. But the congregation sings out in the old African polyrhythmic style of the sea islands, almost as though the hymns were ancient spirituals. The present organist accompanies the hymns in a jazz-influenced modern gospel style that dominates the singers and sometimes drowns them out. The result is exciting, but I miss the special kind of excitement of the old *a capella* shouting style for which Johns Island is famous.

[P.vii-A]

871 875 241 866 nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

114 Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

114 123 •533 During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

[P. ix-A]

114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
•533 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
spiritual became one of the great inspirational
[668] theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of cit-
874 izenship schools to other islands and the Charles-
ton area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson de-
641 veloped the first program to train citizenship
school teachers. This curriculum spread through-
out the South as participants came from the Car-
olinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Ten-
nessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
875 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home
641 to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
871 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segre-
gation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil
563 rights groups turned their attention to voter regis-
[668] tration, they were able to use the approach pi-
oneered in the citizenship schools between 1957
and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
[668] proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on
Johns Island were the foundation for the voting
rights movement and played a major role in the
overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year work-
ing with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In
1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963
they moved to Johns Island with their small son,
[123] Evan. During the next two years they shared in the
life and fellowship of the black community around
Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help pre-
serve some of the older black folk culture on the
island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As
Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days,
you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at
Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or New-
port and see some of the finest folk talent in the
country. But the communities from which these
people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and
his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana.
I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Car-
olina) will provide an example of what can be done
114 in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
533 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
545 [P. ix-B]

114 533 545 arranged for the Moving Star Hall Singers to perform their spirituals, folktales, and children's game songs across the country, from the Newport Folk Festival to UCLA. The Carawans produced recordings of the Moving Star Hall Singers, and Guy told of them and sang their songs in his own performances. As a result of Guy and Candie's efforts, the Moving Star Hall Singers became widely recognized across the country as perhaps the preeminent tradition bearers of the oldest layer of African-American cultural expression in living American tradition.

114 533 During this period Guy and Candie organized
a number of "Sing for Freedom" workshops around
the South, cosponsored by Highlander, the Southern
Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student
Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. At a
three-day gathering in Edwards, Mississippi, for
example, young civil rights workers from all over
the region came together. There they exchanged
(545) ideas and shared experiences with the Moving Star
Hall Singers, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, and
traditional singers and instrumentalists from Mississippi.
There they swapped songs and learned
new verses. Many sea island songs were thus introduced
to new areas in the South because of these
freedom song gatherings.

114 527 545 Guy and Candie also worked closely with the Johns Island community to produce a series of sea island folk festivals. The folk festivals picked up much of their meaning from the context of all the things that were happening in the sea islands and the South—the citizenship schools, the voter registration drives, the mass demonstrations of the civil rights movement. The festivals did not celebrate a quaint past; they related the past to the present. The festival became the focal point for "pilgrimages" from leading civil rights workers in the South—Vincent Harding, Julius Lester, Bob Moses, Willie Peacock, and Bernice Johnson Reagon. The old songs and stories, the old talk and tales seemed strikingly new and fresh. The traditions of the past had a power to move a generation, a power to call the youth to the task of achieving democracy.

(P.X-A)

114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of
123 the older folk material. Each of these projects
brought a complex mixture of success and problems
and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were
131 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and
marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
[505] gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat until
[491] the early part of the century, when bridges and
causeways connecting it with the mainland began
to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these descendants
177 of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect,
Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean
traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and
supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity
with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals
and hymns and a local "praise house" form of
worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side.
344 For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered
clapboard building—had been the central
meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a
"tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge,
and a community of worship. Here the members
[996] could express themselves freely and fully; in the
Sunday night worship service each person took a
turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a
song.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Methodist
177 Church, where a number of these same people
794 attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more
formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church
with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed
choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s
with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals
led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a
month when he preached in other churches, the
congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals
and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P xii-A)

796 •533 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 178 796 [344] [794] [795] In the intervening years, this evolution toward more modern forms has continued. Moving Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 474 [443] [529] [872] [666] In the 1960s the most unusual and modern institution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club, a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island. It contained a large grocery store and the only gym on the island and served as a center for adult education and voter registration.

[P.xii-B]

159 ment for the Arts. Here is how the NEA described her:

> 159
> 533 Sea Island people are noted for their retention of African cultural influences and for their creation of a rich body of game, work and religious songs, stories and craft skills. Janie Hunter is the matriarch of a family notable there for its musical artistry. Her voice is as strong and clear as a clarion bell and she carries in her memory a large repertoire of religious songs. Many of these came from her father, Joe Bligen, a fisherman and part-time farmer. Mrs. Hunter is an artistic decision-maker as well as a singer for the Moving Star Hall Singers, a group named for a Praise House on Johns Island. [545]
>
> The music heard in Moving Star Hall is joyous, a music in celebration of life, freedom, and a deeply felt religious optimism, the dawning of a better world. Mrs. Hunter and her friends and family sing not only with their voices, but with their hands and feet as well.
>
> 159 Like many other folk artists, Janie Hunter is multi-talented. She carries in her memory a collection of animal stories. They are for the amusement of children and adults, but they also show the uses of wit and logic. Mrs. Hunter is a maker of quilts and of dolls, a keeper of folk medicine techniques. She learned and remembered all these skills, and she is also an activist and transmitter. She has trained her children and the children of neighbors to respect and keep the beauty and artistic self-sufficiency of an important American place.

Mrs. Hunter felt she represented the island community when she was recognized for her cultural knowledge. When she traveled to Washington to receive the award, a vanload of family and friends from Johns Island went with her and joined in a jubilant shout as part of the Heritage award concert. When she returned to Johns Island, she was honored by her church, Wesley Methodist, and valued as a teacher in their own series on Afro-American heritage. Also recognized that same year by the NEA was a basketmaker from the Charleston lowcountry, Mrs. Mary Jane Manigault.

178
889 The older people will not lose their heritage. It is already too much a part of them. But they have

(P XV-A)

217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

887 In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

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> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

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114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

(p. xvi-A)

128 THIS BOOK IS BASED on tape-recorded material. In putting it together we tried to use the strongest photograph to illustrate each text; the person in an accompanying photograph is not necessarily the person speaking. Please see the list of photograph credits at the back of the book for specific information.

(197) (113) We have deliberately refrained from caricaturing the pronunciation of Gullah dialect by distorted spellings. There are a number of scholarly studies of Gullah now available in addition to Lorenzo Turner's classic 1949 book *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

533 128 The songs are sung without instrumental accompaniment. In most of the religious songs, complex hand and foot rhythms are added as the spirit mounts. This particular style is called "shouting." Songs are usually sung with an informal leader in a call and response pattern. The transcriptions are inevitable simplifications of what is sung, for to capture the subtle shadings and minute variations of pitch and rhythm would result in an almost unreadable score. Because the style is highly improvisational, the melody, the words, and the order of the verses vary with every performance and from one singer to another.

533 216 We strongly urge the reader to listen to these songs on two Folkways records of Johns Island music that are available: *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts and Children's Games* and *Moving Star Hall Singers and Alan Lomax: Sea Island Folk Festival*. A new compilation of the best of these recordings is available on Folkways album 40031, *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts, Folktales and Children's Songs*. An interesting comparison of the particular style in the Johns Island area with that of coastal singers further south can be made by listening to the albums of songs from the Georgia sea islands and from nearby McIntosh County.

(p. xvi-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

[435]
[465]
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We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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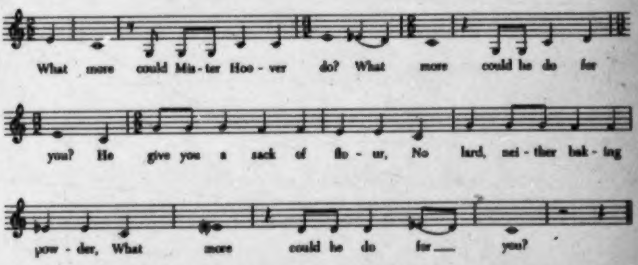
659

Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

● [533]
[539]


What more could Mis - ter Hoo - ver do? What more could he do for
you? He give you a sack of flo - ur, No lard, nei - ther bak - ing
pow - der, What more could he do for___ you?

[252]

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

The Bligen Family

ROW, MICHAEL, ROW

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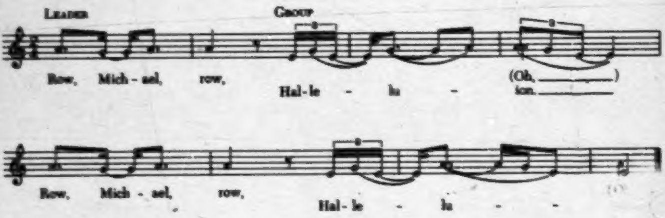
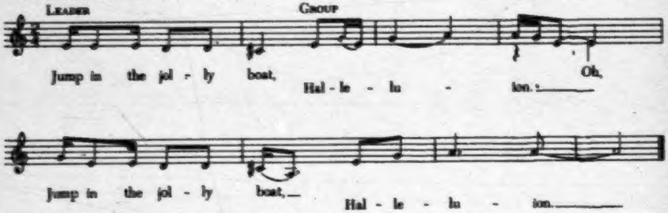


Leader
Group
Row, Mich - ael, row,
Hal - le - lu - ion.
(Oh,)
Row, Mich - ael, row,
Hal - le - lu - -

ALTERNATE VERSION



Leader
Group
Jump in the jol - ly boat,
Hal - le - lu - ion.
Oh,
Jump in the jol - ly boat,
Hal - le - lu - ion.

Leader: Let's row the boat ashore,
Group: Hallelujon.
Leader: Let's row the boat ashore,
Group: Hallelujon.

Oh see how we do row . . . etc.

Row, Michael, row . . . etc.

Let's row the boat ashore . . . etc.

Just gimme a living chance . . . etc.

Sister Mary, row your boat . . . etc.

Everybody try their chance . . . etc.

Row, Michael, row,
Hallelujon.
Row, Michael, row,
Hallelujon.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

WE DIDN'T 'LOW TO GO OUT AFTER DARK

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When I was a young girl, we just used to go talk with friends, we didn't 'low to go out after dark. So the first time I went to a dance—that was 1932 when I first met my husband which is Willie Hunter—my mother tell 'em to have me back in the house by sundown. He took me to a dance at Miller Hill, right over there where that water hole at. Mr. Charles Clemmens used to have a dance call a trap dance. It be drums and be washboard and all such music like that.

Used to have dances called Charleston, Pick Cherry, Alligator—get down on floor and do 'gator tap-tap, tap on your heel and toe—"One-Cent Herring, Two-Cent-Grits." Sometime two hook hand and go around. Call that a waltz dance. Some of these dance now is old-time dance, but they just change and give it a different name.

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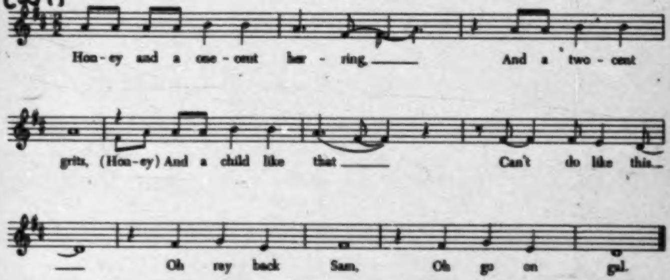
Hon - ey and a one - cent her - ring ___ And a two - cent
grits, (Hon-ey) And a child like that ___ Can't do like this ___
Oh ray back Sam, Oh go on gal.

So when we get to the dance, the dance music was so good that we stays until about nine-thirty, and the water come across the road. The water come so high and I get scared. He have to put me on his back and tote me across the water. When we get back to the house, my mother smoke a pipe.

I was scared to go in. I said, "Willie, you best go in, 'cause I ain't going get a beating." My mother won't lick you before company.

So he went in, he says, "Mama, I'm sorry because we late. The tide was high across the road."

And my daddy, he is the first one to give in. He said, "Well, I know 'cause I go to the creek, and I know how that tide run."

I didn't say "good night." I sloop right in my bed. I was seventeen then.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Bertha Smith and
the Moving Star Hall congregation

LAY DOWN BODY

● 533
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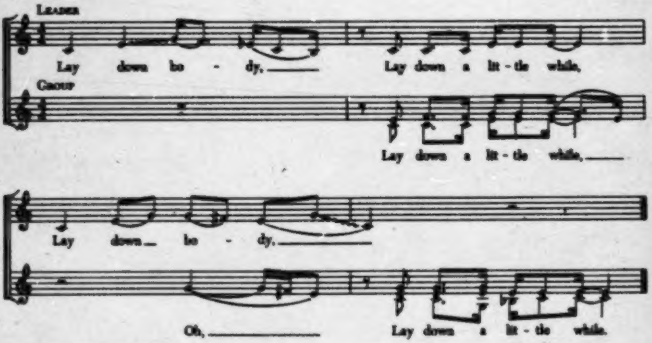
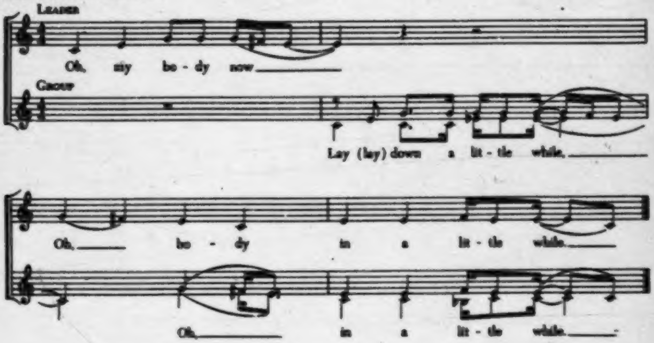

LEADER
Lay down bo - dy,
Lay down a lit - tle while,
GROUP
Lay down a lit - tle while,
Lay down bo - dy.
Oh,
Lay down a lit - tle while.

ALTERNATE VERSION I


LEADER
Oh, my bo - dy now
GROUP
Lay (lay) down a lit - tle while,
Oh, bo - dy in a lit - tle while.
Oh, in a lit - tle while.

4: Carawan & Carawan   B,Z-5 (1959-1988)   1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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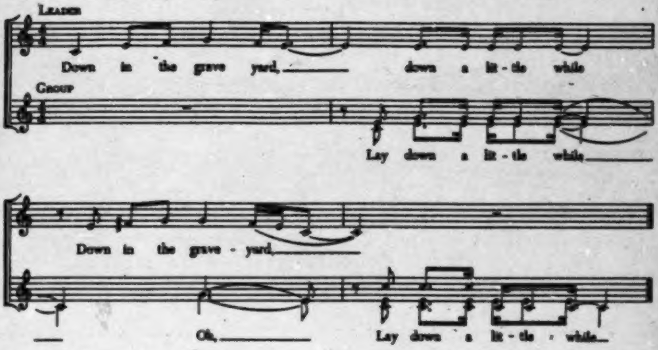

LEADER
Down in the grave yard,
down a lit - tle while
GROUP
Lay down a lit - tle while
Down in the grave - yard,
Oh,
Lay down a lit - tle - while

LEADER: I know you tired,
GROUP: Lay down a little while,
LEADER: I know you tired,
GROUP: Lay down a little while.

Come from a distance . . . etc.

Oh body now . . . etc.

Ain't you had a hard time? . . . etc.

Last December . . . etc.

Tedious was my journey . . . etc.

Rocky was my road, Lord . . . etc.

Ain't you got somebody gone? . . . etc.

I got somebody gone . . . etc.

Oh my body now . . . etc.

Just keep a-rollin' . . . etc.

Body, ain't you tired? . . . etc.

Body, ain't you lonesome? . . . etc.

Body, ain't you weary? . . . etc.

Lay down body,
Lay down a little while,
Lay down body,
Lay down a little while.

4: Carawan & Carawan   B,Z-5 (1959-1988)   1989
NN23   Sea Islanders   NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Mary Pinckney

● 533
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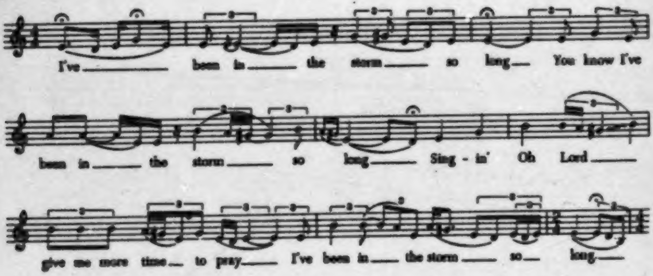
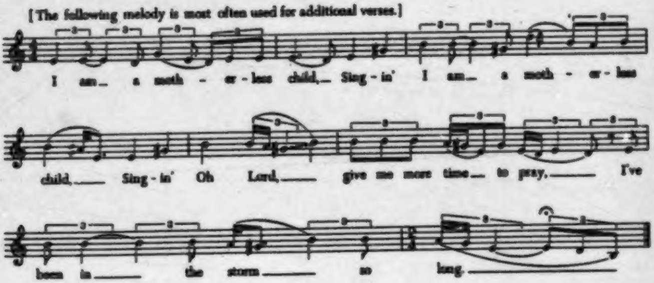
BEEN IN THE STORM SO LONG


I've — been in — the storm — so long — You know I've
been in — the storm — so long — Sing-in' Oh Lord —
give me more time — to pray — I've been in — the storm — so — long —

[The following melody is most often used for additional verses.]


I am — a moth-er-less child, — Sing-in' I am — a moth-er-less
child, — Sing-in' Oh Lord, — give me more time — to pray, — I've
been in — the storm — so long. —

This is a needy time,
This is a needy time,
Singin' Oh Lord, give me more time to pray,
I've been in the storm so long.

Lord, I need you now . . . etc.

Lord, I need your prayer . . . etc.

Stop this wicked race . . . etc.

Stop all my wicked ways . . . etc.

Somebody need you now . . . etc.

My neighbors need you now . . . etc.

My children need you now . . . etc.

Just look what a shape I'm in,
Just look what a shape I'm in,
Cryin' Oh Lord, give me more time to pray,
I've been in the storm so long.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

● 533
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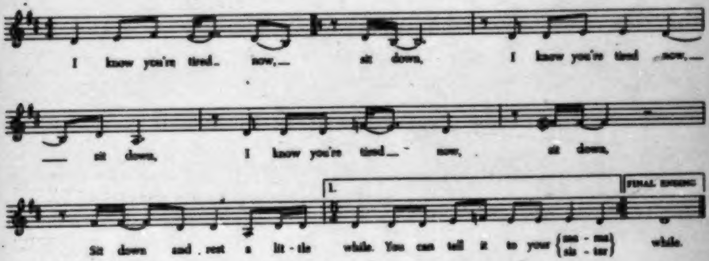
The Moving Star Hall congregation

I KNOW YOU'RE TIRED


I know you're tired now, sit down, I know you're tired now, sit down, I know you're tired now, sit down,
Sit down and rest a little while. You can tell it to your ma-ma / sis-ter while.
1.
FINAL ENDING

You can tell it to your mama, sit down,
sister,
You can tell it to your mama, sit down,
sister,
You can tell it to your mama, sit down,
sister,
Sit down and rest a little while.

You come from a distance, sit down . . . etc.

I know you weary, sit down . . . etc.

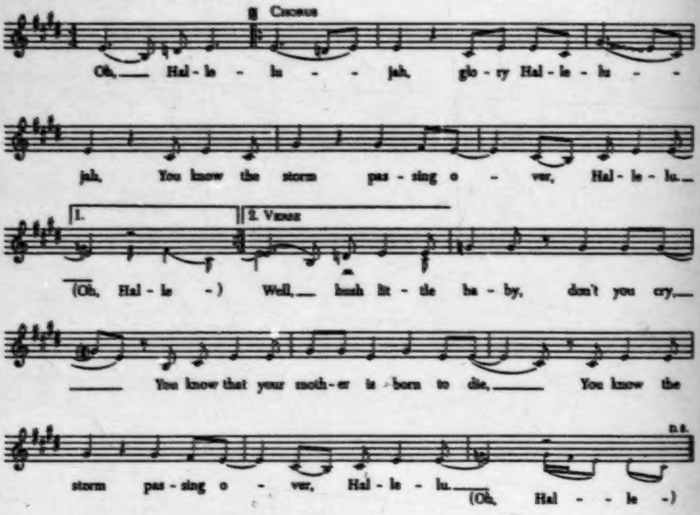
Oh sit down servant, sit down . . . etc.

I know you're tired now, sit down,
I know you're tired now, sit down,
I know you're tired now, sit down,
Sit down and rest a little while.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Bertha Smith and
• 533 *the Moving Star Hall congregation*
539

THE STORM IS PASSING OVER


Chorus
Oh, Hal-le-lu-jah, glo-ry Hal-le-lu-jah, You know the storm pas-sing o-ver, Hal-le-lu
1.
(Oh, Hal-le-)
2. Verse
Well, hush lit-tle ba-by, don't you cry, You know that your moth-er is born to die, You know the storm pas-sing o-ver, Hal-le-lu.
(Oh, Hal-le-)
D.S.

Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down,
Sometimes I'm almost to the ground,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

(Chorus–2 times)

Some say Peter, some say Paul,
Ain't but one God for we all,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

The tallest tree in Paradise
Christians call the tree of life,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

(Chorus–2 times)

Mr. Esau Jenkins

SHOUTING FOR A BETTER DAY

796 533 786 Every Sunday night these people have meeting at Moving Star Hall. Every December 24th they have what we call a Christmas watch night meeting, and every December 31st, a New Year's watch. They sing from twelve o'clock until day clean.

They know the tune, they're ready to shout. They're giving praise to the great Supreme Being who have stood by them in the past days from slavery up to this present. Just to hear these songs remind us of our hardship. Those songs are the ones that made them happy, made them go through those hard days—the days when they didn't have a place to live of their own, didn't have a piece of land of their own, and were living on a plantation.

786 796 These people are hard-pressed people, and they are optimistic enough to believe that there are better days coming. When they get into these religious shouts, they feel so happy until that's all they can do but shout. The motions go into the hands and into the feet and they start clapping, and you can't keep them sitting—not when they start clapping, brother. They feel so happy 'til they got to shout. People sixty years and seventy years old clap and shout and jump all over the floor without falling down.

786 796 154 These people are trying to satisfy themselves, satisfy their soul. It's the only place they could be happy because life is so hard and sometimes there are any number of persons who do not know where the next meal is coming from. They can't talk back if they go on the farm regardless of how mean they were treated. Sometime their task they had was overburdening. Sometimes somebody watching them that they didn't have a chance even to stoop. They sometimes sad. But they're trying to get rid of it. If you could come and see them how they look when they singing and shouting, you can see they singing for a better day, shouting for a better day. And that's the thing that make them keep on shouting.

Mr. John Smalls

796 786 ANYTIME YOU COME, YOU IS IN

We don't charge nothing to come in Moving Star Hall. Moving Star Hall are free, and the door are open for each and every one. Whether you are white, whether you are dark like myself, or different color, come in. If you can preach, come on. We all preach. Don't say, no, you can't come up to this table. You can preach, pray, or testify. If you want speak, anything you want say, you got the opportunity—we give it to you.

'Cause we know we are in God hand. God made *all* of us. Don't make a few and somebody else made some; God made all. So I am happy to meet you all.

I hear the white madam say a while ago she glad we let 'em come in. "No, don't worry with that, Madam. Anytime you come, you is in. Bring friend, whatever; you's in." So sing, shout, get happy. But don't fall out!

7

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

LEAD ME TO THE ROCK HIGHER AND HIGH*

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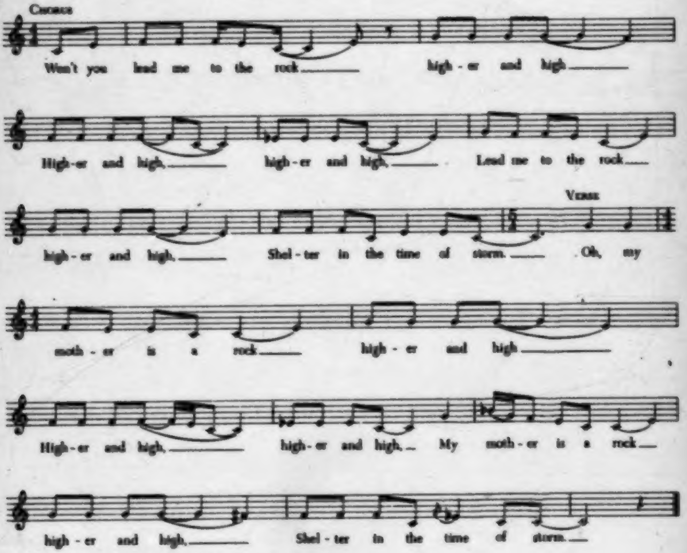
CHORUS
Won't you lead me to the rock___ high-er and high___
High-er and high,___ high-er and high,___ Lead me to the rock___
high-er and high,___ Shel-ter in the time of storm.___
VERSE
Oh, my moth-er is a rock___ high-er and high___
High-er and high,___ high-er and high,__ My moth-er is a rock__
high-er and high,___ Shel-ter in the time of storm.__

---

* Also sung elsewhere in the South "*Lead Me to the Rock Higher Than I.*"

(CHORUS)

Won't you lead me to the rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Won't you lead me to the rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

Oh King Jesus is a rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Oh King Jesus is a rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

(CHORUS)

Oh my God is a rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Oh my God is a rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

VARIANT OF VERSE:
Oh my God is a rock in a weary land,
Weary land, weary land,
God is a rock in a weary land,
Shelter in a time of storm.

4: Carawan & Carawan   B,Z-5 (1959-1988)   1989
NN23   Sea Islanders   NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 69]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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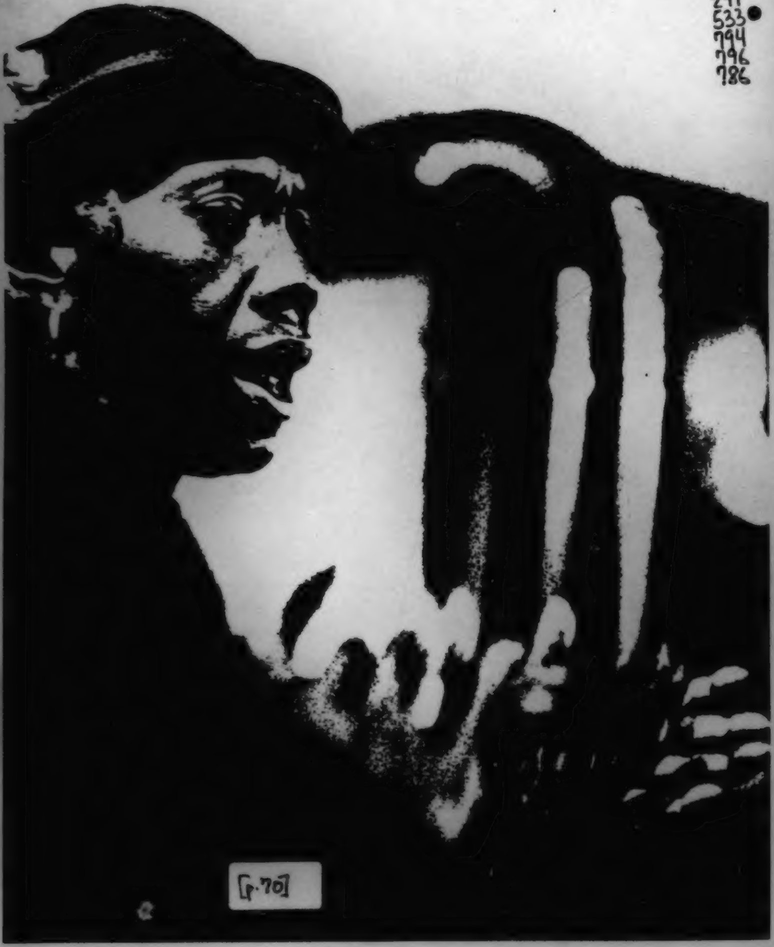

[p.70]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.72]

4: Carawan & Carawan   B,Z-5 (1959-1988)   1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN2

South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.73]

Mrs. Isabel Simmons

ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL

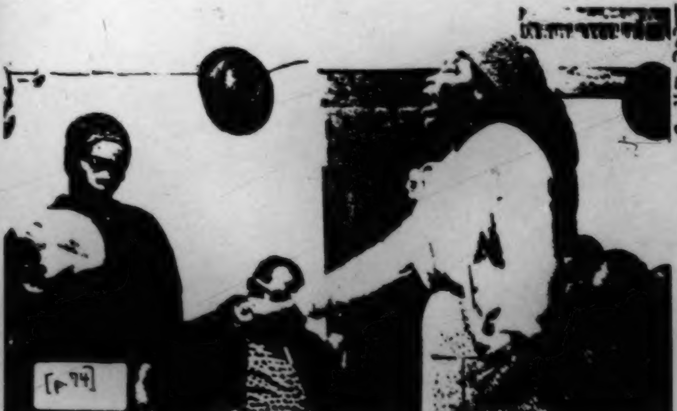
The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some 796
church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to 344
carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters; 346
some neighbors.

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. 344
Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets 346
enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there.

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how 796
to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later 786
going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to 869
different place, before we leave home.

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those 796
old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy 786
Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had 533
plenty of singing womans, too.

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the 796
neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too.



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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

Mr. John Smalls

EVERYBODY HAS A TURN

794 796 In the meeting, Brother Joe Deas, he are the oldest person in there, we takes him for the leading man. We put him in the front to take the text. Then take myself, I follow. Then whosoever I wanted to assist—Eli Smith or any other leader. And we go on that way. Everybody has a turn.

We have prayer service the first Sunday night in the month; and the second Sunday night let the brothers preach; then the third Sunday night we let the sisters testify; then we go right back on the fourth Sunday night the brothers will preach again. We used to had it just how it come. We feel like prayer meeting tonight, we have that. But later days, we decided we would mark it out, that every person would know where he going.

That way we trying to do it now. Brother Deas takes the text, when is preaching night, and the boys supposed to preach from that text he give you. You can go preach anywhere you want to preach, but you come right back to that same text.

● [533] Any individual, soon as the man finish preach, if you wanted to raise a song, you raise it. And another way, anytime we call someone up to preach, if anybody want to sing for you, can sing you up there. Then one can sing you down. Anybody. They can't sing long as you're talking; wait 'til you finish talk.

539 796 *Mr. John Smalls*

TURN THESE BIG FISH LOOSE

Now friends, we still moving on.
I'm not going to linger with you
'Cause I want to turn these big fish loose.

Brother Deas will come and set the foundation,
The road we going to travel by,
That all of you could know the way to go.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

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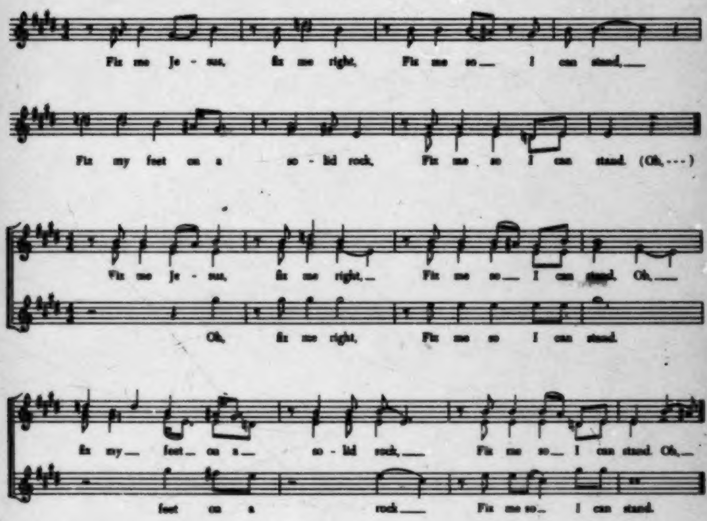
Mrs. Mary Pinckney and the Moving Star Hall congregation

FIX ME JESUS


Fix me Je - sus, fix me right, Fix me so__ I can stand,__
Fix my feet on a so - lid rock, Fix me so I can stand. (Oh, - - -)
Fix me Je - sus, fix me right,__ Fix me so__ I can stand. Oh,__
Oh, fix me right, Fix me so I can stand.
fix my__ feet__ on a__ so - lid rock,__ Fix me so__ I can stand. Oh,__
feet on a rock__ Fix me so__ I can stand.

My tongue tired and I can't speak plain,
Fix me so I can stand,
Fix my feet on a solid rock,
Fix me so I can stand.

Fix my home, Lord, fix it right . . . etc.

Fix my family, Lord, fix them right . . . etc.

Fix my neighbor, fix them right . . . etc.

Fix me warrior, fix me right . . . etc.

Fix me Jesus, fix me right,
Fix me so I can stand,
Fix my feet on a solid rock,
Fix me so I can stand

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Mrs. Janie Hunter and the Moving Star Hall congregation

ASK THE WATCHMAN HOW LONG

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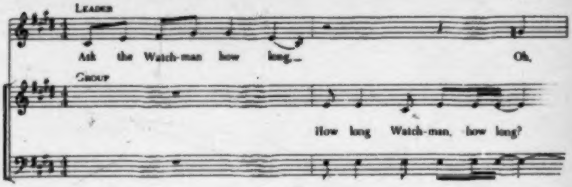
LEADER
Ask the Watch-man how long.
Oh,
GROUP
How long Watch-man, how long?

LEADER: Oh ask my brother how long.
GROUP: How long Watchman, how long?

In sixty-four how long? . . . etc.
Well, ask my daughter how long . . . etc.
Well, ask my preacher how long . . . etc.

Oh all my neighbors, how long? . . . etc.

Oh before the roll call . . . etc.
Oh just a few more risings . . . etc.
Oh ask my leader how long . . . etc.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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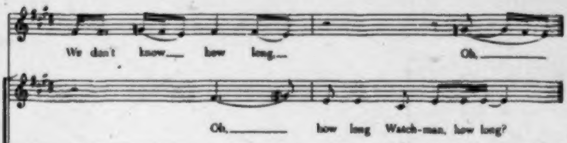
We don't know — how long —
Oh, —
Oh, —
how long Watch-man, how long?

Well, all my neighbors how long? . . . etc.

Oh soon it will be over . . . etc.
Watchman, how long? . . . etc.
You know how long, how long . . . etc.
Ask my friends how long . . . etc.

Brother Jenkins, how long? . . . etc.

Oh, how long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?
How long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?

4: Carawan & Carawan   B,Z-5 (1959-1988)   1989
NN23   Sea Islanders   NN23
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Johns Island

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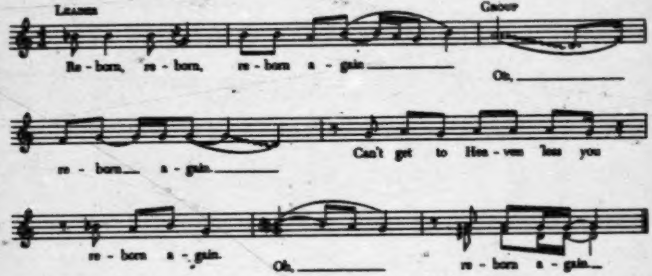
Mr. Benjamin Bligen and the Moving Star Hall congregation

REBORN AGAIN



LEADER: Won't you reborn Member, won't you reborn again,
GROUP: Oh, reborn again.
LEADER: Well, you must keep a-rollin', got to reborn again,
GROUP: Oh, reborn again.

Oh, reborn warriors, won't you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.
Yes you can't get to Heaven 'less you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh, goin' to the river, gonna take my walk,
Oh, reborn again.
Meet Jesus mother, gonna stand and talk,
Oh, reborn again.

Just let me put on my travelin' shoes,
Oh, reborn again.
I'm goin' to Heaven, gonna carry the news,
Oh, reborn again.

Let me tell you the natural fact,
Oh, reborn again.
Can't get to Heaven, ain't comin' back,
Oh, reborn again.

When I get to Heaven, gonna sing and shout,
Oh, reborn again.
There ain't nobody there gonna turn me out,
Oh, reborn again.

When I get to Heaven, gonna sit right down,
Oh, reborn again.
Ask Jesus mother for my starry crown,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh Satan is mad and I'm so glad,
Oh, reborn again.
Lost the soul he thought he had,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh Satan he walking like a snake in the grass,
Oh, reborn again.
He always walk in a Christian path,
Oh, reborn again.

Wonder what Satan keep growlin' about,
Oh, reborn again.
He chained up in Hell and he can't get out,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh one of these mornings and it won't be long,
Oh, reborn again.
I'll see some grapes a-hanging down,
Oh, reborn again.

I pick a grape and I suck the juice,
Oh, reborn again.
Sweetest grape I ever taste,
Oh, reborn again.

Reborn, reborn, reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.
Can't get to Heaven 'less you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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533 ●

Mr. Benjamin Bligen

I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794

I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 533 (869)

There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

Mr. William Saunders

THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 796 786 (778)

We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

159 771 178 829 794 796

For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

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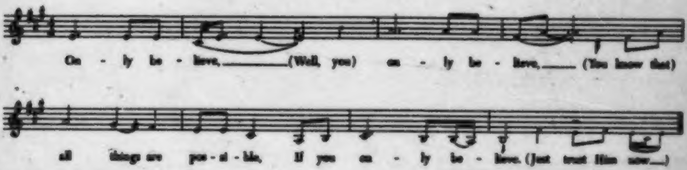
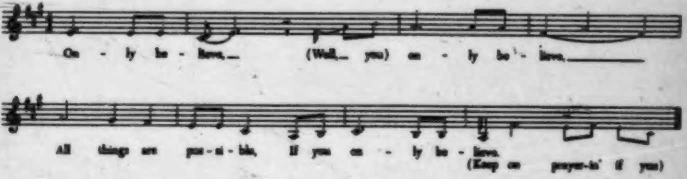
Mrs. Ruth Bligen

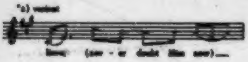
ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE IF YOU ONLY BELIEVE


On - ly be - lieve,____ (Well, you) on - ly be - lieve,____ (You know that)
all things are pos - si - ble, If you on - ly be - lieve. (Just trust Him now__)

ALTERNATE VERSION


On - ly be - lieve,__ (Well,__ you) on - ly be - lieve,________
All things are pos - si - ble, If you on - ly be - lieve.
(Keep on prayer-in' if you)

*a) variant


lieve (nev - er doubt Him now)__

Only believe, (well, you) only believe,
(You know that) all things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Just trust Him now) only believe, (well, you) only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Keep on prayerin', if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Tell the warriors, if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

Only believe (never doubt Him now), only believe,
(You know that) all things are possible,
If you only believe.

(He'll be your {mother, {father, if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

STORIES

517
461 When we was small, we didn't 'low to go no place, but we have all we
fun at home. On weekend when we do all work what told to us and after
● (533) we finish work at night, we sit down and we all sing different old song, and
(524) parents teach us different game and riddles. We go and cut the wood and
wrap up the house with green oak and muckle wood, then we all stays by
(538) the fire chimbley and listen to stories.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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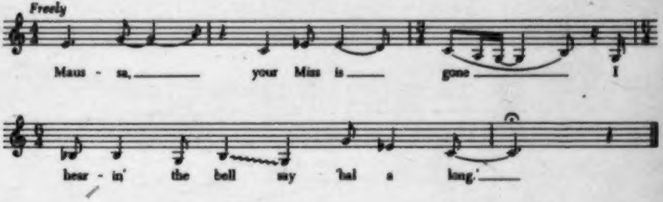
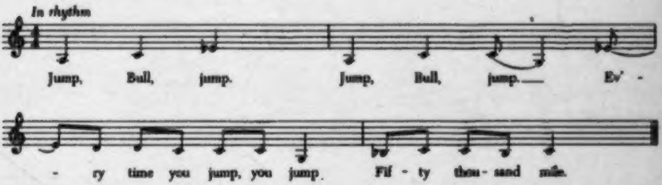
Well the old Devil had a rooster; he was a teller. And as they began to travel, old Rooster get in the Devil face and spur 'em. Say:


Freely
Maus - sa, your Miss is gone I
hear - in' the bell say 'bai a long.'

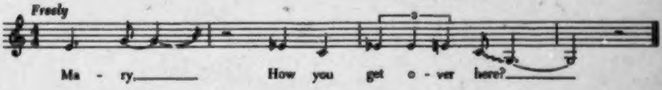
Devil say, "How long gone?"

Say, "Long time."

Then he tell the rooster, "Go down yonder and get my old bull that jump fifty mile away." And the Devil get on the old bull back, say:


In rhythm
Jump, Bull, jump. Jump, Bull, jump. Ev' -
- ry time you jump, you jump. Fif - ty thou - sand mile.

Well, he made one jump, he jump right by Jack and Mary, and Jack drop one grain corn, and it turn a ocean of water. And all that time it take for that water to dry up, Jack and sister was far away. Then the Devil made a loud cry, saying:


Freely
Ma - ry, How you get o - ver here?

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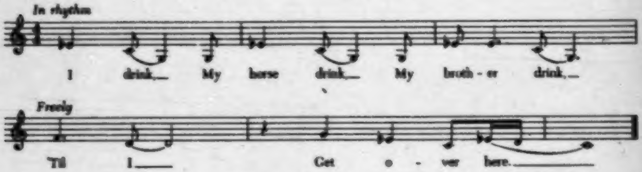
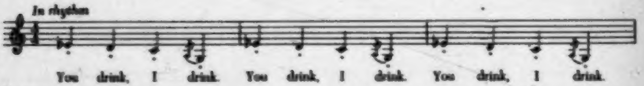
●533

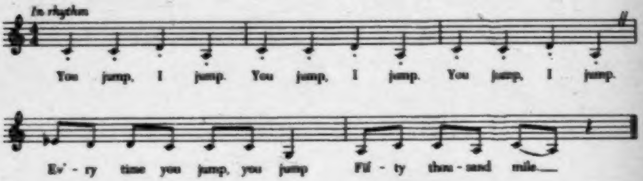
Mary say:


In rhythm
I drink__ My horse drink__ My broth - er drink__
Freely
Til I____ Get o - ver here.________

Old Bull say:


In rhythm
You drink, I drink. You drink, I drink. You drink, I drink.

He drink, and bust the bull belly loose, and when he think the bull was going fifty thousand mile an hour, the bull couldn't make but five mile an hour. And old Devil take some string and tie the old bull belly up. And all that time Jack and Mary was far away. Then he get on the old bull back and say:


In rhythm
You jump, I jump. You jump, I jump. You jump, I jump.
Ev' - ry time you jump, you jump Fif - ty thou - sand mile.___

And jump right by Mary and Jack. Then Jack drop another grain of corn, and it turn a whole mountain, 'cross and 'cross the world. Old Devil say:

"Mary,
How you get
Over here?"

BARNEY McCABE

538 We learn some these stories from my uncle, Harry Williams. He was kind of rough, but he really could tell some stories.

539 Once upon a time it was a twin sister and brother. The sister name was Mary and the brother name was Jack. One day they decided to go on a long traveling. But Jack was a wise child and he told Mary to go in the house and ask Mother could we go. Her mother say, "Yes, you could go, but take care." So Jack say, "Wait a minute, Sister," and went to the barn and get four grain of corn. And Mary said to Jack, "What you gonna do with that corn?" Jack said, "In a long while, you will see." So he put the corn in his pocket.

Then before he leave home Jack told his mother, say, "Mama, I got three dogs—Barney McCabe, Doodle-le-doo and Soo-Boy. I going to leave a glass of milk on the table. If you see that glass of milk turn to blood, I want you to turn my dogs loose."

So they went on traveling and all the time wondering what was the end going be. Pretty soon it come dark and they begin to get weary. They knocked at an old lady house. The old lady run to the door, say, "Who is it?"

Jack say, "Me, Mama. Could we spend the night here? 'Cause we far from home and we very tired." Old lady say, "Oh yes, come on in."

All that time she was a witch-craft and the children didn't know it. She fed them and put them to bed. She had a knife she call "Tommy Hawk." After she put the children to bed she began to sharpen it up:

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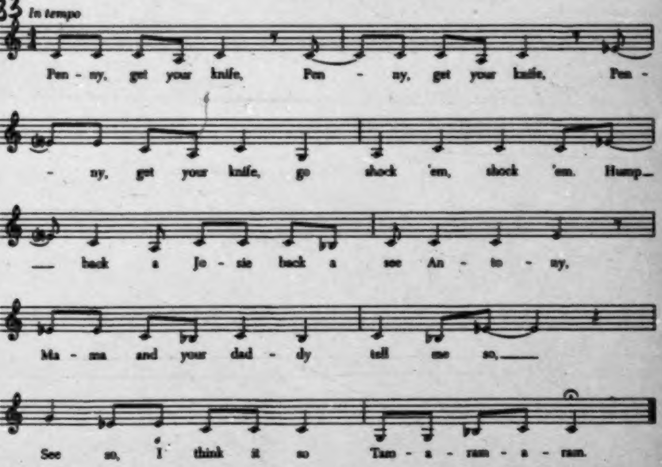

In tempo
Pen - ny, get your knife, Pen - ny, get your knife, Pen - ny, get your knife, go shock 'em, shock 'em. Hump— back a Jo - sie back a see An - to - ny,
Ma - ma and your dad - dy tell me so,—
See so, I think it so Tam - a - ram - a - ram.

539 Children say, "Grandma, what's all that noise? We can't sleep."

She say, "That ain't nothing but your grandma frock-tail switchin' to get your supper hot. You all go back to sleep."

So Jack begin to wonder how they can get out of there. Then he remember the old lady have a room full of pumpkin. Jack takes two pumpkin and put 'em in the bed and cover 'em over, pretend it was he and his sister. Then Jack throw one grain of corn to the window, and it turn into a ladder. Jack and Mary climbed the ladder down and they start traveling for home.

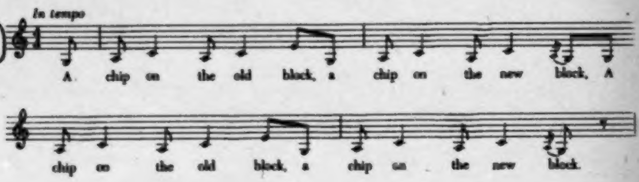
The old lady sharpen her knife faster:

> "Penny, get your knife,
> Penny, get your knife,
> Penny, get your knife, go shock 'em, shock 'em.
>
> Hump back a Josie back a see Antony,
> Mama and your daddy tell me so,
> See so, I think it so
> Tam-a-ram-a-ram."

She didn't hear no noise, so she sneak in the room and chop up the pumpkins in the bed. Then she ran in the kitchen and got a dishpan, and pull back the cover. And when she think she putting the meat in the pan for cook for breakfast, she drop the pumpkin in the pan. And Jack and Mary was long gone.

She get mad, grab Tommy Hawk and flew down on those children. The children drop another grain of corn and it turn a tall pine tree. And Jack and Mary flew up in that tree. The old lady start cut on the tree, say:

● (533)


In tempo
A chip on the old block, a chip on the new block, A
chip on the old block, a chip on the new block.

Then Jack drop a grain of corn down from the pine tree, and back home that glass of milk turn to blood. Them dogs begin to holler. Jack's mother (533) ran in the yard and turned the dogs loose. Jack say:

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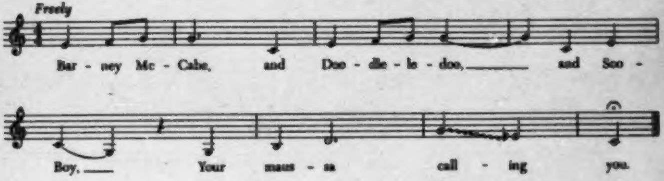
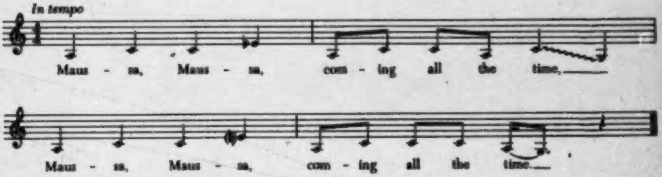

Freely
Bar - ney Mc - Cabe, and Doo - dle - le - doo, and Soo - Boy. Your maus - sa call - ing you.

Dogs say:


In tempo
Maus - sa, Maus - sa, com - ing all the time,
Maus - sa, Maus - sa, com - ing all the time.

Old witch say:

"A chip on the old block, a chip on the new block,
A chip on the old block, a chip on the new block."

Every time she chip, the tree lean and lean. Jack call:

"Barney McCabe, and Doodle-le-doo, and Soo-Boy,
Your maussa almost gone."

Dogs say:

"Maussa, Maussa, coming all the time,
Maussa, Maussa, coming all the time."

539 Jack drop another corn, the last corn, and it turn a bridge. And then when the old witch pull the ax up for take the last chop and chop Jack and Mary in the head, the dogs ran up. Barney McCabe cut her throat, Doodle-le-doo suck her blood and Soo-Boy drag her on the bridge, the bridge bend and that's the way that story end.

Mrs. Janie Hunter

WHEN YOU GET TO OLD AGE YOU TURN A HAG

775 I say see it to believe it. Ghosts shows up to some people, and some people they don't. But I'm not scared of 'em. I'm more scared of live.

776 888 But hags, that's real. When you get to old age, you turn a hag. Hags come to your house and hag your children. Children can't sleep, or a hag take somebody child and put 'em under the bed. Sometime a hag sit on you and keep you from getting up, try to smother you.

But you could tell a hag. I heard my old people say, if you want to tell a hag, put a broom 'cross your door. If that's a hag, he going take up that broom, ain't going step across it.

[789] If hag bother you, use salt and pepper. Sprinkle either by your bed or 'cross your door and they won't come in. The salt burn their skin.

Mrs. Mary Pinckney

I GOT A BLUESY FEELING

● 533 I like blues. My uncles Benji and Willis—oh, they could sing! Willis is come home 'round twelve and one o'clock in the night and wake up everybody on the hill. Go one side by the pump and he sing that blues from then 'til four in the morning. Wake up everybody. Mama is come outside, say, "Willis, why don't you come on in the house?"

"Can't come in the house right now, Doll, I got a bluesy feeling." He sing.

[534] And Benji, Benji could sing! He have one them cowhorn and he get up and put it to his mouth and blow 'em. Just like a trumpet. And Willis be singing the song and he be blowing the horn and they going down the road blowing and singing. And I be right there listening to 'em. I follow them too. They is like for I follow them 'cause I sing right along with them.

[534] My brothers sing blues too. Joe, he like all different kind of song—spiritual and blues. Sometime he be home by heself and go on the road or stay on that porch or go under a tree, sit down and just play his guitar and sing his song. And I'll go and help him.

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South Carolina
Johns Island

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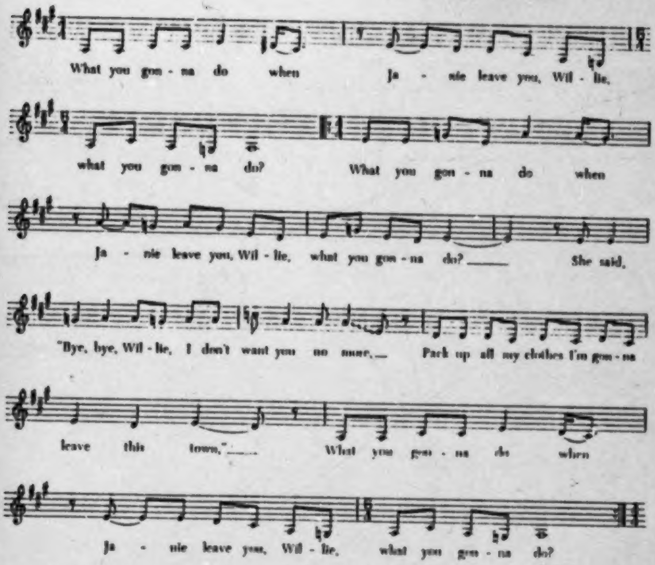
Mr. Joe Hunter

WHAT YOU GONNA DO?


What you gon - na do when Ja - nie leave you, Wil - lie,
what you gon - na do? What you gon - na do when
Ja - nie leave you, Wil - lie, what you gon - na do? ___ She said,
"Bye, bye, Wil - lie, I don't want you no more, __ Pack up all my clothes I'm gon - na
leave this town," ___ What you gon - na do when
Ja - nie leave you, Wil - lie, what you gon - na do?

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What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, baby, I don't want you no more",
Sitting here crying, Janie, please don't go,
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, Willie, I'm putting you down,
Pack up my clothes I'm gonna leave this town",
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

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South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

WATER MY FLOWERS

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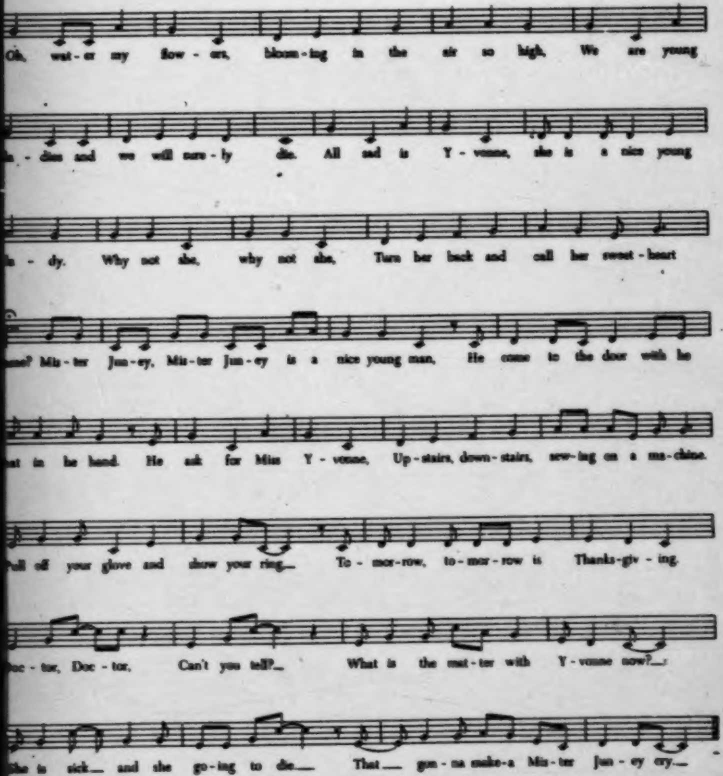
Oh, wat-er my flow-ers, bloom-ing in the air so high. We are young
- dies and we will sure-ly die. All sad is Y-vonne, she is a nice young
- dy. Why not she, why not she, Turn her back and call her sweet-heart
one? Mis-ter Jun-ey, Mis-ter Jun-ey is a nice young man, He come to the door with he
at in he hand. He ask for Miss Y-vonne, Up-stairs, down-stairs, sew-ing on a ma-chine.
ull off your glove and show your ring__ To-mor-row, to-mor-row is Thanks-giv-ing.
oc-tor, Doc-tor, Can't you tell?__ What is the mat-ter with Y-vonne now?__
She is sick__ and she go-ing to die__ That__ gon-na make-a Mis-ter Jun-ey cry__

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South Carolina
Johns Island

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● 533
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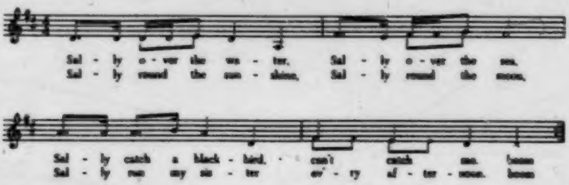
The Hunter and Pinckney children

SALLY ROUND THE SUNSHINE


Sal - ly o - ver the wa - ter, Sal - ly o - ver the sea,
Sal - ly round the sun - shine, Sal - ly round the moon,
Sal - ly catch a black - bird, can't catch me. boom
Sal - ly run my sis - ter ev' - ry af - ter - noon. boom

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter, Mrs. Mary Pinckney, and their children

OLD LADY COME FROM BOOSTER

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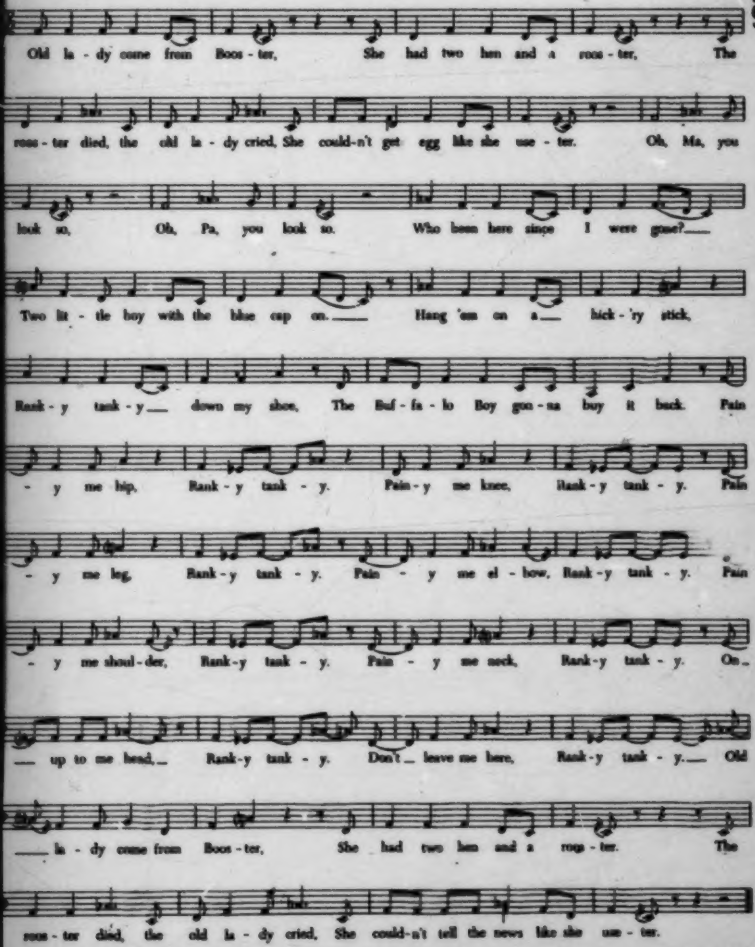
Old la - dy come from Boos - ter, She had two hen and a roos - ter, The
roos - ter died, the old la - dy cried, She could-n't get egg like she use - ter. Oh, Ma, you
look so, Oh, Pa, you look so. Who been here since I were gone?
Two lit - tle boy with the blue cap on. Hang 'em on a hick - 'ry stick,
Rank - y tank - y down my shoe, The Buf - fa - lo Boy gon - na buy it back. Pain
- y me hip, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me knee, Rank - y tank - y. Pain
- y me leg, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me el - bow, Rank - y tank - y. Pain
- y me shoul - der, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me neck, Rank - y tank - y. On
up to me head, Rank - y tank - y. Don't leave me here, Rank - y tank - y. Old
la - dy come from Boos - ter, She had two hen and a roos - ter. The
roos - ter died, the old la - dy cried, She could-n't tell the news like she use - ter.

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Johns Island

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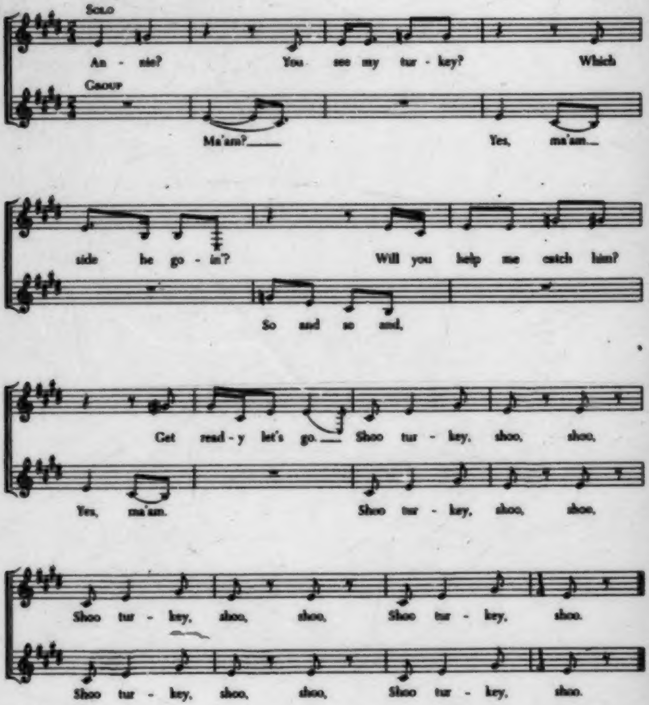
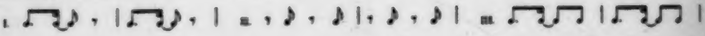
Mrs. Janie Hunter, Mrs. Mary Pinckney, and their children

SHOO TURKEY SHOO



Solo
An - nie? You see my tur - key? Which side he go - in'? Will you help me catch him? Get read - y let's go.__ Shoo tur - key, shoo, shoo, Shoo tur - key, shoo, shoo, Shoo tur - key, shoo.
Group
Ma'am?____ Yes, ma'am__ So and so and, Yes, ma'am. Shoo tur - key, shoo, shoo, Shoo tur - key, shoo, shoo, Shoo tur - key, shoo.

Clapping pattern often used



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[539]

Solo: Annie?
Group: Ma'am?
Solo: You been to the wedding?
Group: Yes, ma'am.
Solo: Did you get any cake?
Group: Yes, ma'am.
Solo: How nice that taste?
Group: Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes, ma'am.
Did you get any wine?
Yes, ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
You see my turkey?
Yes, ma'am.
Which side he gone?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes, ma'am.
Get ready, let's go.
All: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo.

524 *Miss Yvonne Hunter*

A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

● 533
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It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When Mama teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

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Johns Island

Mr. Benjamin Bligen and the Moving Star Hall congregation

TALKIN' 'BOUT A GOOD TIME

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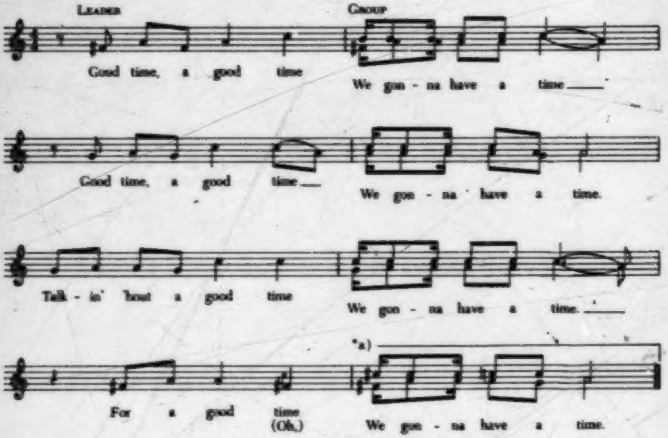
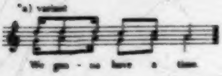

LEADER
GROUP
Good time, a good time
We gon - na have a time
Good time, a good time
We gon - na have a time.
Talk - in' 'bout a good time
We gon - na have a time.
*a)
For a good time
(Oh,)
We gon - na have a time.


*a) variant
We gon - na have a time.

LEADER: Singing for a good time,
GROUP: We gonna have a time,
LEADER: For a good time,
GROUP: We gonna have a time.

Praying for a good time . . . etc.

Let's have a good time . . . etc.

Talkin' 'bout a good time,
We gonna have a time,
For a good time,
We gonna have a time.

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Miss Laura Rivers

THAT'S ALL RIGHT

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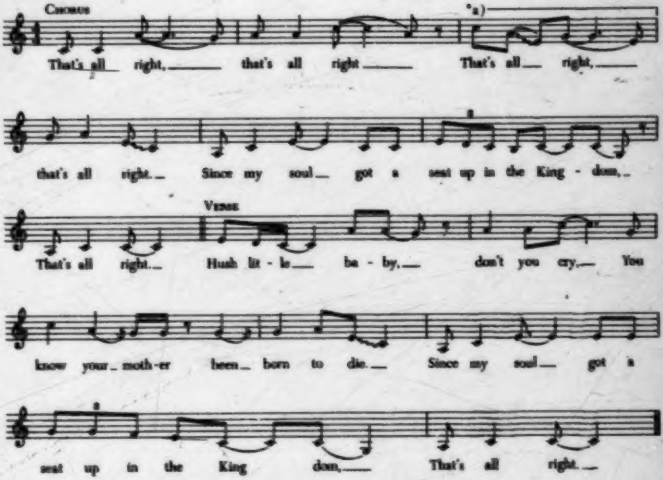
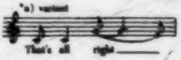

Chorus
*a)
That's all right, that's all right That's all right, that's all right. Since my soul got a seat up in the King - dom, That's all right.
Verse
Hush lit - le ba - by, don't you cry, You know your moth-er been born to die. Since my soul got a seat up in the King dom, That's all right.


*a) variant
That's all right

You go brute me, you go scorn me,
You go scandalize my name.
Since my soul go a seat up in the Kingdom,
That's all right.

(Chorus)

One of these mornings, it won't be long,
You ask for me and I'll be gone.
Since my soul . . . etc.

Two white horses side by side,
One of those horses Jesus ride.
Since my soul . . . etc.

(Chorus)

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Johns Island

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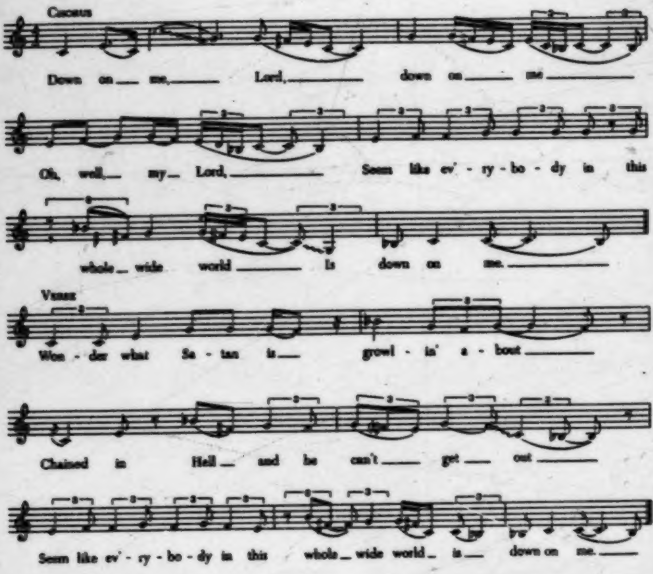
Mrs. Mary Pinckney

DOWN ON ME


Chorus
Down on me, Lord, down on me
Oh, well my Lord, Seem like ev'-ry-bo-dy in this
whole wide world Is down on me.
Verse
Won-der what Sa-tan is growl-in' a-bout
Chained in Hell and he can't get out
Seem like ev'-ry-bo-dy in this whole wide world is down on me.

I been buked and I been scorned,
I been talked about sure as you're born.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

When I get to Heaven going to sing and shout,
Nobody there going to put me out.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

You can talk about me just as you please;
The more you talk the more I'll bend my knees.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

One of these days and it won't be long,
You go look for me and I'll be gone.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

(Chorus)
Down on me, Lord, down on me.
Oh, well, my Lord, seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter and
the Moving Star Hall congregation

YOU GOT TO MOVE

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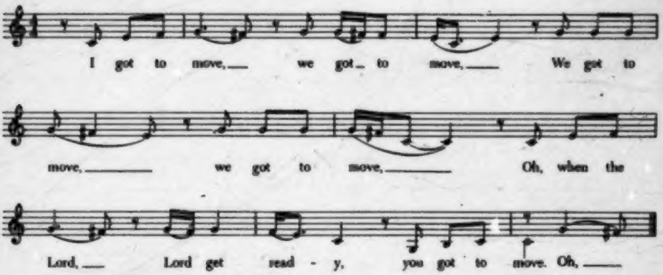
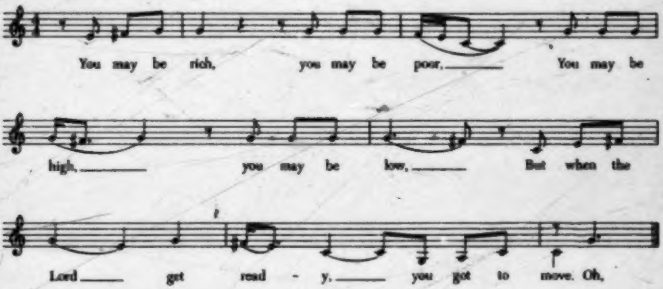

I got to move, we got to move, We got to
move, we got to move, Oh, when the
Lord, Lord get read - y, you got to move. Oh,

ALTERNATE VERSION


You may be rich, you may be poor, You may be
high, you may be low, But when the
Lord get read - y, you got to move. Oh,

My brother move, my brother move,
My brother move, my brother move.
Oh, when the Lord get ready, you got to move.

O sometime I'm up, sometime I'm down,
Sometime I'm almost to the ground.
Oh, when the Lord get ready, you got to move.

Oh we got to move, we got to move,
We got to move, we got to move.
When the Lord, Lord get ready, you got to move.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

The Moving Star Hall congregation

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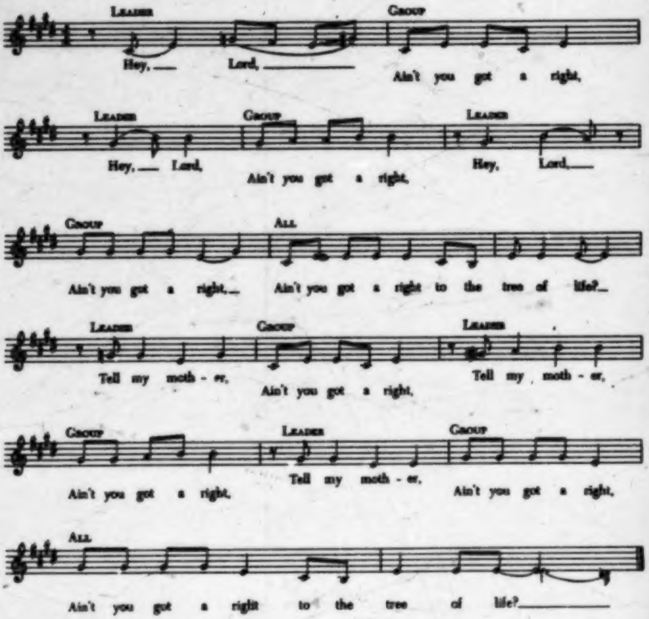
AIN'T YOU GOT A RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE?


Leader
Hey, Lord,
Group
Ain't you got a right,
Leader
Hey, Lord,
Group
Ain't you got a right,
Leader
Hey, Lord,
Group
Ain't you got a right,
All
Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?
Leader
Tell my moth - er,
Group
Ain't you got a right,
Leader
Tell my moth - er,
Group
Ain't you got a right,
Leader
Tell my moth - er,
Group
Ain't you got a right,
All
Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?

Leader: Tell my father,
  Group: Ain't you got a right,
Leader: Tell my father,
  Group: Ain't you got a right,
Leader: Tell my father,
  Group: Ain't you got a right,
All: Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?

Tell my children . . . etc.

Tell the world . . . etc.

Hey, Lord,
  Ain't you got a right,
Hey, Lord,
  Ain't you got a right,
Hey, Lord,
  Ain't you got a right,
Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Alice Wine

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

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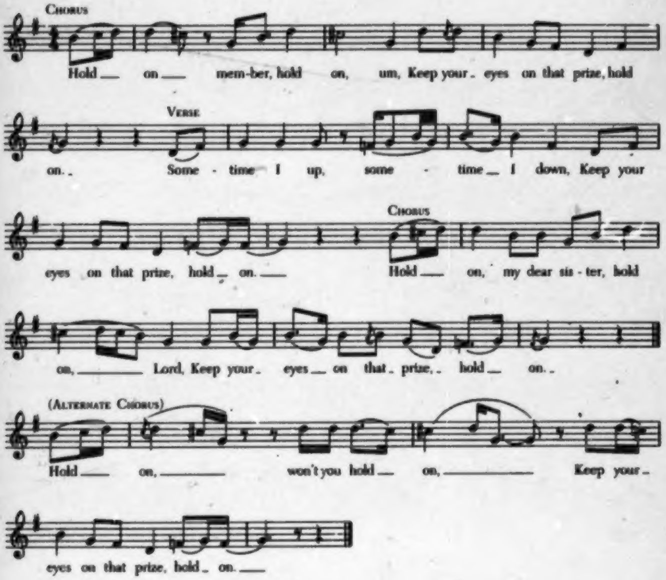
CHORUS
Hold on member, hold on, um, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold
on. VERSE Some - time I up, some - time I down, Keep your
eyes on that prize, hold on. CHORUS Hold on, my dear sis - ter, hold
on, Lord, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.
(ALTERNATE CHORUS) Hold on, won't you hold on, Keep your
eyes on that prize, hold on.

♩=54 (represents a composite tempo)

(CHORUS)
Hold on, member, hold on,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(VERSE)
Sometime I up, sometime I down,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(CHORUS)
Hold on, my dear sister, hold on, Lord,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

This song has an interesting history. When Guy first spent time on Johns Island and sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," which he had learned from Pete Seeger in the 1950s, Mrs. Wine said, "Oh, I know a different echo to that," and sang, "Keep your eyes on the prize." Guy later passed these words on to the young people then involved in the civil rights movement. Those words became the ones sung all across the South as part of the movement. (114) (668)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Myles Horton[*]

THE PEOPLE OF JOHNS ISLAND DESERVE TRIBUTE

871 641 666 185 The citizenship schools were inspired by Esau Jenkins who was trying to teach his Johns Island bus passengers to pass the South Carolina literacy test required for voting. In a 1955 Highlander Folk School workshop he had asked for help. In an effort to respond, we spent the next two years acquainting ourselves with the culture of the island and with the people. We found out by living and working with them what their problems were and that they wanted to be voting citizens.

(875) Bernice Robinson was chosen to teach the first citizenship school because she respected the people and, having had no teaching experience, would be nonjudgmental and experimental. She began the first class in the back room of a cooperative store by saying, "I am not a teacher; we are here to learn together. You're going to teach me as much as I am going to teach you."

The curriculum was developed day by day. They learned to write letters, to order from catalogs, and fill out money orders. They made stories about the vegetables they grew and the tools they used, the chairs and tables in the room. They moved on to reading the Declaration of Human Rights, which hung on the wall, and the South Carolina constitution, which was a prerequisite of becoming a voter.

●(533) Music and singing familiar songs livened up the long evenings and blended with the joy of learning. Singing sea island folk songs, spirituals, and protest songs helped build the group's consciousness and boosted morale as together they tackled the difficult task of learning to read and write.

This pioneer citizenship school, which met biweekly for three months, grew from fourteen to thirty-seven students. It was soon followed by a second school. Out of the first two schools, sixty people, two-thirds the total enrollment, passed the literacy test for voting. That is, they "graduated."

Esau Jenkins had an explanation for this accomplishment. He said, "No one wants anything more than to be a first-class citizen. That is what makes you learn what you have to learn." Their motivation was for an achievable goal rooted in their culture. Although each individual had to learn to read for him or herself, they studied as a group, they supported and encouraged each other as they painfully struggled to read. As they took the first steps in learning to read and write, they made use of what they had learned without delay. The process that evolved was simple and easy to explain and could easily be adopted elsewhere, making the multiplying process easy.

The enthusiastic new voters immediately spread the word to neighboring South Carolina and Georgia sea islands. Soon the citizenship schools were started on Edisto and Wadmalaw islands, and before the three months period ended, half those enrolled had learned to read and write well enough to pass

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[*] Founder and former director of the Highlander Folk School.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Alice Wine

I WILL OVERCOME

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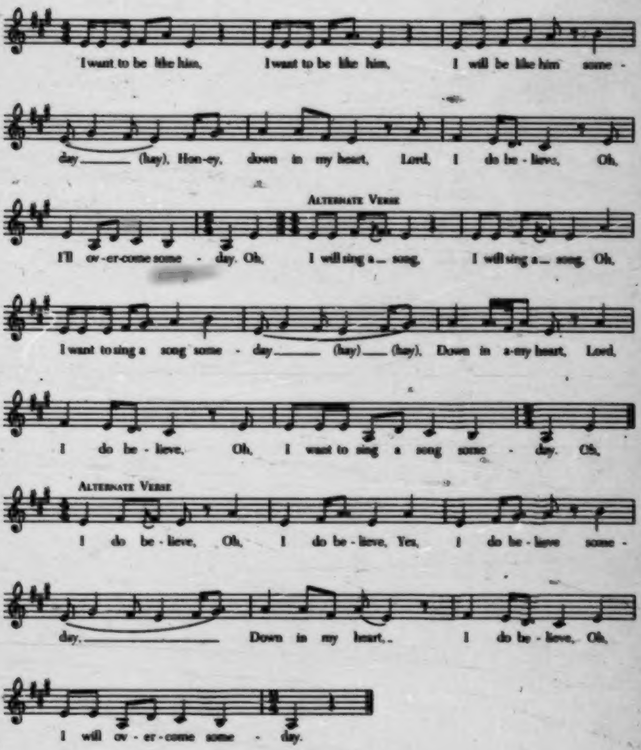
I want to be like him, I want to be like him, I will be like him some -
day (hay). Hon-ey, down in my heart, Lord, I do be - lieve, Oh,
I'll ov - er-come some - day. Oh,
Alternate Verse
I will sing a song, I will sing a song, Oh,
I want to sing a song some - day (hay) (hay). Down in a-my heart, Lord,
I do be - lieve, Oh, I want to sing a song some - day. Oh,
Alternate Verse
I do be - lieve, Oh, I do be - lieve, Yes, I do be - lieve some -
day, Down in my heart, I do be - lieve, Oh,
I will ov - er - come some - day.

I want to be like him . . . etc.

I will sing a song . . . etc.

I want to walk like him . . . etc.

I want to pray like him . . . etc.

I'll see the king . . . etc.

Oh, I will overcome, I will overcome, I will overcome someday,
Lordy, down in my heart, I do believe, I will overcome someday.

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533 The story of how "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" is a fascinating one, and much of the history is in the South Carolina lowcountry area. "I Will Overcome" was widely known in black churches throughout the South. The first time it was used in an organized protest situation was in Charleston in 1945, when the Food and Tobacco Workers were out on strike for five months and had a daily picket line. The striking workers, mainly black women, began to adapt the song to fit their situation. They changed the *I* to *we* and sang, "We will win our rights" and "We will organize" and "The Lord will see us through." Workers from the Charleston situation took the song to Highlander where it became the unofficial theme song for years and was carried to many other picket lines by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander staff. Pete Seeger learned it from Zilphia and began introducing it to northern gatherings and northern audiences. Guy Carawan heard it from Pete and others, and through his work at Highlander, helped pass it back into the southern freedom movement in the early 1960s. From there it went around the world.

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Ms. Elaine Jenkins

I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

888 I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

533 186 The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. (178) Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

216 186 My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safekeeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

Mrs. Janie Hunter

WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

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538 When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some
173 of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and
867 folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

869 And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as
186 the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for
178 them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the
867 future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older
869 than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to
[538] know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

186 The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang
533 and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there
[534] wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

Mr. Benjamin Bligen

I FIND NO FAULT LIVING HERE ON THE ISLAND

823 Johns Island is my home. I was born and raised here and it's peaceful. I've traveled across different parts of the world and I love different places, but I love Johns Island the best. There's peace and quiet here and nice places to go if you feel like travel. You can go in the river. You can go swimming if you want to. You can go fishing if you want to. You can go crabbing if you want to do that. You can go and sing and shout if you want to; no one to stop you. I find no fault living here on the island. I love it here. I make up my mind to be here until the Lord make a change in my life, to take me on home.

The singing brings joy to your soul. Regardless of how much you feel
● 533 down and you feel like you can't move, you start singing one of those songs
and it brings joy to your soul and lifts you up. You start thinking about the
good things, and we realize we've got somebody on our side. We're trying to
pass it on to the younger folks so they can carry the old traditions on. Our old
[178] folks taught us these songs and they would like for we to carry it on through
[186] and they would like for we to pass it on to the young generation so they can
keep it up. And I hope that many and many that come to our different
churches will hear these songs and sing these songs and will be able to carry it
on when the older ones have passed on out of this world.

771 It's a different time now than when I was growing up. It's harder now to
get the young people to come on the old side. My family had a strong re-
869 ligion. I try to keep on the road that they was traveling on and do the things
they want me to do. Hopefully, I will be able to teach the young people the
way that my old folks taught me, that they will have something that will stand
by them when trouble rise. Whatever comes up against them in life they will
have something to hold onto, something that will deliver them in the time of
their need.

Mrs. Ruth Bligen

I LIKE TO BE ALONG WITH THE OLD PEOPLE

533 In church we have a lot of different choirs. But if you want to raise a
794 song, you do that. Sometimes I'll sing. Sometimes Benji will sing. We have a
good time. Our pastor is very nice. He likes singing, too. He likes singing and
shouting. On Thursday nights, we have prayer meeting at the church. You
(796) express yourself and pray. It's like in the hall. The young children are not
(888) going to carry on like the old people. But I like the old people. I like to be
along with the old people. And we had some wonderful times in Moving Star.
I don't think the old songs will die out. We still sing it. I love the old songs.

Mr. William Saunders

IT'S THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SINK OR SWIM

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I feel I am more fortunate than most of the people who are fighting in the arena I'm fighting in because I have a way to recharge my batteries. The religious aspect of my life is pretty real to me. It gives me a lot of strength. Wesley has been my power base. It has made me feel capable of doing anything.

It's real to me. The singing of a person like Ruth Bligen. To hear her
794 some Sunday morning. Her voice is purer now than it's ever been. She just
533 gets to the place that she passes out. Just knowing what she's been through,
796 when she sings it's not a performance. You can see Benji on a Sunday morning. He's so articulate and his Gullah becomes more profound than most people because he says it so distinctly. But to see him pray and he gets to a point where he's got to stop, and somebody's got to go and take him down because of his problems.

771 It's the place where people sink or swim. And it's the only thing they
794 have to turn to. And yet they're always walking with their heads held high.
And that's a strength that the people had on the island that I believe is dying.
178 That strength and the proudness is not there anymore like it used to be.
Sometimes you skip a generation, for whatever reason. So maybe the cycle will come back again.

But it's a base for me. It's my power source. I come back to the city, where I can go for another six days with all of the adversities that face me.

Rev. A. C. Jenkins

ANY MINISTER WHO DOESN'T TAP INTO THOSE DEEP FEELINGS WILL NOT SURVIVE HERE

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I want to bring a world view into the church—a view that includes justice and liberation in Latin America and in South Africa. My challenge is to make it real to the people on Johns Island, and if it is real for them, they want to shout about it. The way I can touch those feelings is to end my sermon with the words to one of the old songs.

Any minister who doesn't tap into those deep feelings will not survive here. The people will go elsewhere. I love serving on Johns Island. Before I was here I was at an elite church in Charleston. Amens were few due to a different worship experience.

Mr. Gerald Mackey

I TAKE MY TAPE RECORDER TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY

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I enjoy the older people. I'm always around them, and I talk with them often. I enjoy the singing. In fact I take my tape recorder to church every Sunday, hoping for one of the old spirituals raised from the floor. Then I play them all through the week on my stereo here or in my car. It's very uplifting. I don't miss any opportunity I get to hear the older people sing. To me, that's pride. I really enjoy listening to them and I think it's great that they have managed to preserve that aspect of our history.

I'm afraid that eventually after all these people are gone that the younger people will not feel as comfortable carrying on. I wish it wouldn't happen, though.

Mrs. Alice Wine

A LOT OF PEOPLE MISS IT

344 We don't have class meeting in the hall anymore. I miss it. We don't have
346 it now because all these young preachers have everything to the church.
796 What are a few people going to do in a big old church like that? If the people
178 turn out, it never be too large. I like to go to the hall cause you can have your
way. You can exercise better. You can feel yourself. You can do the same thing
in the church, but the church so big.

178 We used to have watch meeting on Christmas night. We turn out in the
796 hall and be there until sunrise. On New Year's, people go all night and be
there til New Year roll in. We pray and sing until New Year roll in, then they
go to preaching. And about five or six o'clock, then the ladies take over to
testify. You don't find that now. Some people can't even say their prayers.

A lot of people miss it. These people is too funny. I can't figure how people could change so fast. Everybody go down to the church. They have watch meeting there, but they don't go but half the night. The hall go until day broad clean. Sometime people shout there until eight or nine o'clock in the morning. We have crowd from all different place—Wadmalaw and Mt. Pleasant and James Island. Ooh man, that hall is packed.

484 It's too dangerous now to walk to the hall at night. You don't find nobody
walking this road no more. It's not the cars only, people do wicked. People
674 will kill you and knock you down and do all kind of thing with you, no, no.
178 When you see my door shut, it's shut. I don't come out.

The people don't have no old songs now, the people have new songs. And
178 I don't know one of them. When they start to sing, I just shut my mouth.
Nothing but new songs now. Ain't got a taste to it. Ain't got a spirit in it. But
533 when the old people used to start to sing those old songs, and it's time to go to
church, man, you run.

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Mr. William Saunders

THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

527 When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties with the
829 folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom
[545] singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a
lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being
black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of
things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed
[771] at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't
understand the strength of something like that.

468 For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole
thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never
829 changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the
● 533 people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is
different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture
that.

527 I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the
829 community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites
could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our
177 expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those
things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that,
829 that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the
political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We
didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

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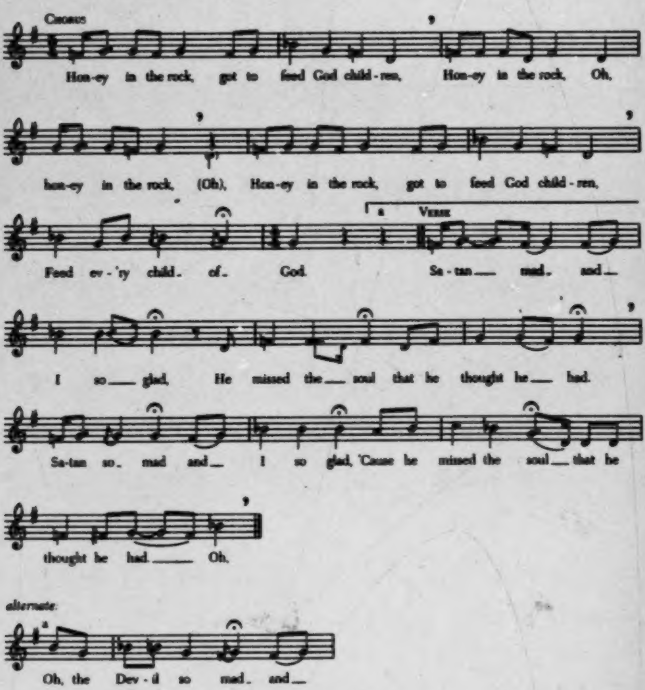
Mrs. Alice Wine

HONEY IN THE ROCK


Chorus
Hon-ey in the rock, got to feed God child-ren, Hon-ey in the rock, Oh,
hon-ey in the rock, (Oh), Hon-ey in the rock, got to feed God child-ren,
Feed ev-'ry child of God
a Verse
Sa-tan mad and
I so glad, He missed the soul that he thought he had.
Sa-tan so mad and I so glad, 'Cause he missed the soul that he
thought he had. Oh,
alternate:
a
Oh, the Dev-il so mad and

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(Chorus)
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

Satan mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.
Oh, the Devil so mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.

(Chorus)

Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.
Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.

(Chorus)

Oh, children, one of these mornings I was walking 'long,
I saw the grapes was a-hanging down,
Lord, I pick a bunch and I suck the juice,
It's the sweetest grape that I ever taste.

(Chorus)
Oh, honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

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[p.233]

AFTERWORD

668 IN 1961 I was one of the students driven from Albany, Georgia, to Dorchester Center in McIntosh, Georgia, for the first Citizenship Education Training School operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Andrew Young had come to Albany to describe the program, which was based on the one Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins had initiated on Johns Island. Many of us who made up the first class had been suspended from Albany State College for participating in demonstrations and getting arrested. The demonstrations were in support of students who had been arrested after they attempted to buy tickets from the "white only" window of the Trailways bus depot. The demonstrations and increasing arrests quickly developed into a full-blown local movement. The idea of becoming trained to run schools to teach people to register and vote seemed a worthwhile activity to us and to the leaders of the local movement.

871 875 641 When we arrived at Dorchester, we met our teachers—Dorothy Cotton, who came from Petersburg, Virginia, to work with SCLC; Septima Clark, who lost her job as a teacher in Charleston because of her membership in the NAACP and her work with Highlander; and Bernice Robinson, who was the first teacher of the citizenship school on Johns Island. In the classes at Dorchester we learned about the political structure of our communities as well as how to teach people to read and write. At that time I had never heard of precinct meetings and knew nothing about the local and state party systems, even though I had done well in my civics and government classes in school. But those classes had nothing to do with what I knew about Georgia. The classes that Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton taught were eye-openers to a new way of looking at our community. (668) For the next ten years, the citizenship school program trained grass roots leaders as they rose to action in the growing civil rights movement throughout the South.

668 •533 114 At Dorchester, Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field

[P 235-A]

668 533 114 secretary and native of the Nashville sit-ins, brought some of us together and told us that a white folk singer was coming to lead us in songs. I was also told that, though he might sound different, we were not to laugh when he sang because he was a true friend of the movement and had been tested and tried during the sit-ins in Nashville. Well, the singer was Guy Carawan, who immediately pulled out his guitar and began to play and sing. I remember hearing for the first time songs such as "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," "Wasn't That a Time!," and hearing the name of Pete Seeger and the Weavers. I remember experiencing no feelings for the soft, flowing ballad style of "Flowers." But when Guy sang "Ol' Blue," he hit familiar territory. None of us had heard the song, but we could feel the story. We requested it over and over again.

Guy spent the rest of the week with us and accompanied us on our freedom songs. He later showed up again and again in mass meetings all over the South and asked me to help him organize several workshops that brought songleaders from the movement together with traditional singers such as Doc Reese from Texas and the Georgia Sea Island Singers from St. Simons Island with singers and song organizers from the topical and folk song revival from the North. Len Chandler, Alan Lomax, Theo Bikel, Phil Ochs, and Tom Paxton were new names we learned during this time.

114 529 533 545 Then in December 1964 Guy and his wife, Candie, invited us, the Freedom Singers from Atlanta, to a festival on Johns Island. There we met Esau Jenkins, who took us to the Progressive Club and a singing. The Georgia Sea Island Singers were there and I heard the Moving Star Hall Singers for the first time. I had never heard or seen this song style before. Led by Janie Hunter and Benjamin Bligen, the singing sounded ancient and the shouting and rhythms more complex than anything I had ever attempted myself.

533 I will never forget the waves of sounds sweeping into each response after a call by Benjie, or

● 533 Mrs. Hunter, or Ruth Bligen. Benjie would call, "Oh, see God's ark," and everybody would respond, "See God ark . . . Tell me how long . . . See God ark a moving." Every note had a wave to it, a curve of sound loaded with vocal power and emotion. Ruth Bligen always carried the high line and the sound of her singing reached you first, pulling the other, lower lines with her. When the chorus ended, the rhythm changed. What had been double rhythm format moved into three cross times. People rose to their feet, and their feet moved in one time, their hands crossed their foot pattern, and the melody operated at a more intense level on top of, or driven by, this multirhythmic activity.

114 Since that first visit I have returned to the island many times to work with Mrs. Hunter and also with Septima Clark and William Saunders, always guided by the work that began with Esau Jenkins' efforts to transform the lives of people of his home community and the cultural research of Guy and Candie Carawan, which went far beyond field collecting. In 1972 I returned to the island for the funeral of Esau Jenkins. I returned also to interview Mrs. Hunter, Septima Clark, and later the tobacco workers who had used "We Shall Overcome" in their union meetings and on the picket lines. (533) On the island it was sung in their traditional song style, complete with the shout and as "I Will Overcome." (529) While working on the Bicentennial Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian, I worked with Rev. Willis Goodwin to bring a congregation and a prayer band from Johns and Yonges islands to the festival during the summer of 1975.

185 THE WORK of Esau Jenkins lives. The work of Septima Clark lives. You can see it in the health centers. You can see it in Bill Saunders' political work and the rise in the number of registered voters. You can see it in the development of Bernice Robinson as a leader, teacher, and candidate for office. Maybe Ethel Grimball is exactly what the school board needs; maybe she is the work of Septima Clark in the eighties and nineties. Today Gerald Mackey's description of teaching in the school system is reminiscent of Septima Clark's struggles with that same system years ago.

[P.236-A]

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
[794] vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[796] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
888 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
538 or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
464 nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[157] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

000 Since their day, many writers have depicted various phases of Negro life and character, ranging from the broad comedy of Octavus Roy Cohen to the sombre psychological sketches of Mrs. Julia Peterkin, the penetrating analysis of DuBose Heyward, and the problem note of T. S. Stribling and Clement Wood.

114 197 To come to the Gullah dialect in particular, owing to the peculiar difficulties of representing its sounds in written speech,[10] its appearances in literature have been gradual and infrequent, and up to the last few years have met with comparatively small popular acclaim. What seem to be its only three ante-bellum echoes are Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837;[11] Jupiter, in Poe's "Gold Bug," 1843;[12] and William Gilmore Simms' three stories "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya, or the Loves of the Driver," appearing in 1845 and 1846.[13]

114 .533 Within a few years after the close of the war there appeared several important contributions by Northerners whom the war had brought into first-hand contact with Negro plantation music.[14] The earliest was a carefully edited collection, *Slave Songs of the United States*, New York, 1867. These songs were gathered mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, and were accompanied with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. In the

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[10] This difficulty exists not only for the writers but for the readers as well. It will probably always keep Gullah from becoming as popular as the easier, upland dialects of Harris and Page.

[11] In her Preface Mrs. Gilman says: "Some apology may be necessary, as a matter of taste, for the frequent introduction of the Negro dialect, but the careful reader will perceive that it has only been done when essential to the development of individual character."

[12] The peculiar genius that could create "Ulalume" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" was not fitted to depict a Negro successfully. Jupiter's characterization, however, is better done than his dialect, which is not so bad for Gullah as it would be if it were an attempt at the upland dialect.

[13] Published in the collection entitled *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, in two parts, New York. As to the authenticity of these stories, Simms says in the Prefatory Advertisement: "I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and in frequent instances from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of man."

[14] See also Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, p. 128.

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*.[illegible]

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One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892.[illegible]

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Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[illegible] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[illegible] Boston, 1870, Chapter IX.

[illegible] Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cupples Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, "Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 19, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[illegible] In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Hartt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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192 used in the sense of hunger or want, or like the proverbial wolf: "Hafful wu'k haa'd fuh keep Stepney frum de do'." [195] *Plat-eye* signifies a ghastly and ghostly night apparition which it is extremely dangerous, even fatal, to meet or see, common to the Georgetown section of the coast. *Plat-eye prowl* is the vivid phrase for the depth of night when it is ill to be abroad.

Gullah English is full of picturesque, interesting words and phrases. Consider, for example, the following: *schemy; speckly; settle' 'ooman*, a woman of a certain age, not a flapper; *newfanglety; disgustuss; foot* for leg: "Deer hab long foot, him run fas'; Cootuh hab shawt foot, him trabble slow"; *buckra*, white man, then simply "white," as *buckra yam*, white potato, *buckra chalk*, white chalk; *altwo*, both, each; *peruse*, to saunter, walk slowly, "Da' gal him bin peruse 'long de road, en 'e nebbuh study 'bout nutt'n"; *ractify*, first "to break," as "Da' buggy ractify," then "to become confused" (mentally), "Da' 'ooman ractify een 'e min'"; *gunjuh* (from gingerbread), the scalloped molasses cakes sold in stores; *Mass, Mas*, (Master) when used with the name: *Mass' John, Mass' Rafe; maussuh* when used without the name, as "Da' muh maussah";* also *Maussuh Jedus*, but *Mastuh* for God alone. *Ox*, plural, "two ox"; *oxin*, singular, "one oxin." *Specify*, to make good, usually in the negative *cyan' specify*, can't make good; of a poor wife, "she cyan' specify"; of trousers, "de britchiz bus', 'e yent specify."

Quizzit, to ask, to question.

[535] *To shout*, not used of exclamation or outcry but of a peculiar religious dance* of the primitive Negro Christians

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[539] Whoga, whoga, whogalor, da humbarnorta, sundundilly?
Coo me sormber norty sundundilly indelarun.
("De Tiger an' de Nyung Lady.")

Olawia! Olawia!
Odatie-tie-tie!
(De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Whale's Eggs.)

*"Mass' Sam tell we ol' Maussa say, 'Sen' Mass' Henry bat-e home.'" Bennett, II, 6.

[533] *For an exposition of the "shout song" see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 32-35; and for a first-hand description see *Slave Songs of the United States*, XII-XV, taken from the N. Y. *Nation*, May 30, 1867. Compare Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925, p. 269.

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SPIRITUALS

533 The Gullahs abundantly possess the characteristic Negro gifts of rhythm, quick emotionalism, and harmony. From these, music inevitably comes. They sing many kinds of songs,—work-songs, boat-songs, shout-songs, and spirituals, but the spirituals, or prayer-songs, outrank in number and interest all other varieties.

As might be expected from background and environment, the spirituals of the low-country Negroes are like those found elsewhere, except that they are more primitive in quality, more fluid and less standardized, ruder in text, more pathetic in tone, and more plaintive in music.

Each time a spiritual is sung it is a new thing. Rarely does one hear a spiritual sung twice in exactly the same way. It is not static or final, but dynamic and growing, for it is the creature of oral tradition and fully exemplifies every possibility of variation associated with oral tradition and communal transmission.

New spirituals are constantly being made, either by

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(152) For an early description of the frenzy of emotionalism reached by Negroes in singing a favorite spiritual like "Jesus said He wouldn't die no mo'," see Elizabeth Kilham, "Sketches in Color, IV," *Putnam's Magazine*, March, 1870, pp. 307 and 308.

(113) Two good boat-songs, as well as a spiritual, a gospel hymn, and a miscellaneous song (all with words and music), are to be found in Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Publishing Co., Boston, 1925.

(113) At least it was in the past, before the Negro folk-tradition came in for the wide attention it is now receiving both in sociology, music, and published criticisms. See Margaret Widdemer's, "Gathering Treasures Among Negro Folk Songs," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, June, 1926, pp. 425, 426, for a convenient and sane review of four recent publications: Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press; Emmet Kennedy, *Mellows*, Boni and Liveright; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press; Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press. Since her review, two other books have been added to the contemporary list: James Weldon Johnson, *The Second Book of Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1926; William Arms Fisher, *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, Oliver Ditson Co., 1926. Mr. Fisher's twelve-page introduction is particularly valuable for its scholarly exposition of the history of the spirituals in American music.

Compare the statement of Professors Odum and Johnson (*Negro Workaday Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1926, p. 188): "There seems to be an impression abroad to the effect that the making of Negro spirituals stopped long ago. On the contrary, it is quite probable that more spirituals are being made today than during the days of slavery."

(179) Mr. Fisher is undeservedly hard on recent examples: "In both texts and music the post-war Spirituals lack the elemental vigor, directness, naturalness and spontaneity of the earlier songs. The texts have become sophisticated and the music debased by that hybrid white American product—the gospel hymn." *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, VIII.

533 individuals" or by groups, spontaneously. The latter method is the more interesting because it is one of the rare contemporary situations where communal composition may be observed actually at work: An emotionally charged atmosphere (as religious worship regularly charges it among all but the most sophisticated Negroes) a striking, rhythmic phrase from preacher, leader, or worshiper, and the thing is done. One of the most beautiful of recent spirituals was a spontaneous outburst of petition to the great "Maussa" after the terrific cyclone of 1911 in South Carolina, built around the refrain-appeal, "Lord, don' let de win' blow here no mo'."[62] And during the World War a similarly tense situation produced a like result. As described by a Negro worshiper on that occasion: "Somebody shout out, 'O Lord, we gwine 't'row dat Kizer down,' an' den somebody else catch 'em an' t'row 'em back, an' befo' you know it de whole chu'ch was a-rockin' an' a-prayin'. It was a gran' hymn."[63]

Many of the simplest and most beautiful of the spirituals are cast in this form: that is, a striking leading line with choral repetition and variations. Frequently the words are crude, childish, and inconsequential, but usually both melody and harmony, especially harmony, are rhyth-

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[61] The same authorities (*Ibid.*, p. 189) describe individual authorship as follows: "Among the lowly Negro folk of the South the making of spirituals is still a reality. Every community has its 'composers'. Often they are supposed to possess some special gift of the 'spirit'. From sermon, prayer, and crude folk wisdom they draw ideas and inspiration for their compositions. Sometimes the results are pathetic, but not infrequently there springs up a song which would compare favorably with the old spirituals."

See, also, Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 21.

[62] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*, No. 39.

[63] Two similar instances are thus described by Odum and Johnson (*The Negro and His Songs*, p. 32): "A Negro preacher recently reached a climax in his discourse in the phrase, 'Oh, with the wings of the morning, I'd fly to that heavenly land.' He repeated this a number of times and made gestures with his arms suggestive of flying. His black robe added to the forcefulness of the suggestion and the impression became a part of the song of that church. . . . If a single personality dominates the whole in an expression that appeals to the present sense of fitness, he is the author of a new song. For example, a visiting minister once shouted out during such a scene: 'Oh, the hearse-wheel a-rollin' an' the graveyard opening—ha, ha,' but got no further, for his refrain was taken up by the chorus, and the next day saw a new version of the well-known song."

(113) See, also, the origin of the song, "O, de ole nigger-driver!" as described by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Negro Spirituals," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1867, pp. 692, 693. It is from this article that the beautiful "Lay dis body down" spiritual is quoted on page 39.

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• 533 mic, plaintive and beautiful. And sometimes the words themselves, at least the leading phrases, possess a naive appeal and essential poetic power.

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539 Here are some of the most characteristic:

See God's Angel comin' down
To see Gawd's bleedin' Lam'.

Dark cloud risin', it looks like rain,
The sun drawin' water from Emanuel's veins,
(Wheel, wheel, wheel, O wheel my Lord.)

I want to die easy when I die.

Looka how dey done muh Lawd;
(Never spoke a mumblin' word,
Mumblin' word.)

I ain't gwine grief muh Lawd no mo'.

Oh de blood done sign mah name.

When I git in heben in my elbow chair,
Then I will rock like angel rock,
(T'ank Gawd I git obuh Jerdan.)

Jesus, when dis whole worl' on fire.

O Death, ain't you gots no shame?

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise,
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight,
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de grave-yard, I'll walk through de grave-yard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to judgment in de evenin' of de day,
When I lay dis body down;
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.

533 In particular, the low-country spirituals have been fortunate
in having two distinctly preservative influences
178 exerted on them. The first is the Charleston Society for
814 the Preservation of Spirituals, an organization composed
of the leading men and women of Charleston, all of whom

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•533 178 814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island." In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals."

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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(177) "Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, *can* sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung widout *a full heart and a troubled sperrit.*"

(162) "St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rossa B. Cooley, who went there in 1908. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

"*St. Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much
(567) nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T.
Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery.
(114) They are products of slavery in the same sense though
533 not in the same degree that they are products of Chris-
567 tianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share
114 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the
178 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery
177 played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas." But back

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Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

Ibid., Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing.
(527) This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
114 the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
178 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
177 being."[21] This combination created them; Christianity
shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
152 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
178 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
567 same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[22] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860. .

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[23] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness,[23] which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
(522) it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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(521) scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[21] With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around (113) Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

[22] Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

[23] See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in (113) Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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Nor must it be forgotten that the Negro is both a splendid actor and a born dramatist: he dramatizes a situation concretely and vividly, and dramatizes himself and his own feelings with equal facility.

All of these factors are to be taken into consideration when dealing with the origin of the spirituals.

But however originated and compounded, spirituals constitute one of the most distinctive additions of the Negro to the culture of America. A leading Negro publicist[14] sums up his race's contributions somewhat as follows: the cakewalk, jazz music, the animal folk-tale, the Blues, and the spirituals. In the minds of many the greatest of all are the spirituals.

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[14] James Weldon Johnson.

CONCLUSION

178 538 ●(533) Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth,[15] *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*,[16] besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu."[17]

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

000 As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

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[609] [831] [171] [15] ~~Told~~ to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'toasts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'tons' ' he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

[16] One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

[17] Bennett, II, 52.

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115 114 Through the kind offices of Chalmers S. Murray, of Charleston and Edisto Island, South Carolina, and Albert H. Stoddard, of Savannah, Georgia, and Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, the doors of their respective islands were opened to me. Their generous assistance will never be forgotten.

[127] To Foresta Hodgson Wood, I am deeply grateful for the many photographs she has generously contributed. To Clara E. Sipprell, Ralph Steiner, Dr. Orrin S. Wightman, Maxfield Parrish, Jr., and others I also give thanks for the use of various pictures.

To Creighton Churchill I am under obligation for his inspiring coöperation and sustained interest.

But for the help generously given by Mary Burnet, of Athens, Georgia, I doubt if this book would ever have been finished. My debt of gratitude to her is immeasurable.

115 114 533 Thanks due these and other friends must not, however, obscure the fact that without the coöperation of the colored singers—the only people qualified through their racial background to present properly the traditional songs—there would have been no occasion for this book or these acknowledgments.

Although Julia Armstrong, of the singing Proctor family, has never told me the half of what she knows, particular thanks are due her for the help she has given since 1915. Her husband, Joe Armstrong, her brother, Willis Proctor, Cornelia and Edith Murphy, and others at the South End of St. Simon's have all aided in resurrecting old songs. Ben Davis, of the North End, comes of another family of singers, and special mention is due him for his loyalty and dependability. Bessie Cuyler, Catherine Ramsey, Peter Davis, Alec Stewart, and Mansfield Jackson have demonstrated the fine spirit on which the successful presentation of this type of music depends. There are other first-rate singers on the island, but the foregoing are singled out because they recognize that the requirements of the group take precedence over those of the individual.

[491] When a causeway was put across the marshes in 1924 and St. Simon's Island was connected with the mainland, we were able to include other Glynn County singers in our "Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia." Among those who have proved their devotion to the slave songs are Jeffry Union and Susyanna Vallion. Several of the children in the Broadfield contingent, trained by Susyanna and her assistants, Clara Roberts, "Coots" Hightower, and Gertrude Cohen, now sing at the Cabin on St. Simon's with the older group. In McIntosh County, Josephine Young is an able exponent of the old-style singing: so are Henry Shaw, Rosa Sallins, Julia Walker, Nancy and Alphonzo Thorpe.

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114 Camden County, too, has many excellent singers, but proximity to Jackson-
115 ville, Florida—as is the case with the section south of Savannah to the Ogeechee
•533 River—has not increased the popularity of the old-time music. Outstanding among
those who sing in the traditional manner are "Major" Harris, Will Harrell, the Lukes, the Gibbses, and several other singing families that appear to have inherited the gift. There are hundreds of others listed in the membership book of our Society. Unfortunately it is impracticable to name them all, though their devotion is the only safeguard against oblivion that this music possesses.

533 Formerly the allegiance of the singers to the slave songs was supported by re-
178 ligious fervor and by the authority of the praise-house and the church, but these
strongholds are now given over to Europeanized book versions and vapid sacred
177 hymns. Neither possesses the power to stir the blood, and in many churches—even
where a vested choir sits in smug self-possession beside the pulpit—the congregation sings the traditional songs when collection time comes around: the deacons know from experience that the old tunes are potent money-getters, while the book songs are not. It is well to recognize, however, that in a materialistic world loyalty needs something more solid to stand on than religious exaltation. For this reason the help of the white friends who have given their moral and financial support to the preservation of the slave music is beyond price. To them this book is gratefully dedicated.

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114 Salem County, New Jersey, where they found sanctuary among the Friends.[4] One of the stations of the underground railroad was located in our community, and the consideration shown the runaway and manumitted slaves caused them to settle there in such numbers that by 1840 they needed, and built, a large two-story church, and, after emancipation, still another. In my childhood they so greatly outnumbered the white voters that we had a colored overseer of the roads. At that time there was no lack of spontaneous music and laughter among them. However, in the late eighties, when a railroad was put through their village, the sophisticated Philadelphia Negroes were enabled to show the country cousins that they were hopelessly out-of-date. Then it was that the dull but stylish hymns of the white man supplanted those of the old régime, and standardized behaviour became the rule.

114 •533 I did not hear the slave songs again until I visited the coast of Georgia in 1909. As we all know, opportunity rarely knocks more than once, and this time I took steps to insure that the songs should not escape me. Herein, I believe, rests my right to know something about them.

The Negroes frankly say that it was a good thing I arrived on St. Simon's when I did, and I know that if I had been there years earlier I could have saved many priceless songs which are now lost. These primitive songs—like the carvings of Africa—had been ridiculed, and the Negroes were ashamed to sing them in the presence of strangers. It took considerable brain-cudgeling to find a way to overcome their feeling that the traditional mode of expression was peculiar and old-fashioned, and to show the singers that many white people recognized its beauty.[5] As can be seen from the photographs illustrating this book, these colored people have regained faith in their birthright—and I hope it will last.

(128) Another question asked me is the reason for avoiding the term "spiritual." Today it is applied to almost any religious song in Negro dialect, regardless of its age or

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[4] *From the probated will of the Quaker, John Fenwick, it is evident that in 1683 there was one "Black" too many in our settlement. He disinherited his "grand childe Elizabeth Adams totally . . . except the Lord open her eyes to see her abominable transgrescen against him, me & her poore father, by giving her true repentance & forsakeing yt Black yt hath beene the ruine of her . . ." About 12 miles south-east of Salem is a town called Othello and a few miles farther east is Gouldtown where Elizabeth and her "blackamoor" are said to have located.*

[5] *For years I tried to think of a way to rekindle interest in the old songs. In the dark of a wintry four A. M., I awakened with the full-blown answer: form a society and admit only those who could sing in the old way. The plan was nothing but good common sense—and it has worked.*

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114 533 [128 origin, and because of its indiscriminate use I have suppressed it whenever possible.[6]

I notice that the only writers who used the term "spirituals," prior to 1909, were those who collected the bulk of their material in South Carolina. References were made to Georgia "spirituals," but Georgia was off the beaten track and, in consequence, few examples were given. In such collections as Hampton's *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, in editions up to 1909, no mention is made of "spirituals"—the songs are called "slave hymns." Nor does the name occur in Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, published in 1898. Our Negroes in southern New Jersey, who had come from Virginia, never used it. The first time I heard it applied to a Negro song was in 1909 on St. Catherine's—a sea island half way between the Savannah River and the Altamaha. I was told by Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County, and by Julia, born on St. Simon's Island, that they always called their own songs "spirituals," although one old grandmother called them "ant'ems" to the end of her days.

But why was the name adopted by the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia and not by those of the states to the northward? A bit of early history may perhaps 175 supply the answer. When a band of Puritans who had settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1630, heard of the need of work among the Indians of South Carolina, they migrated with their pastor in 1695 and settled at a spot they named Dorchester, on the Ashley River, about twenty-six miles from Charleston. Here they stayed until 1750, but the unhealthy location caused them to move on to St. John's Parish in Georgia. There, they established another Congregational church which they called Midway. At this church the Negroes sat in the gallery as was the custom in various other places.[7] Olmstead in *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1853–54) gives an account of the concern shown by members of this Midway community for the moral enlightenment of their slaves and says, "I heard them spoken of even so far away as Virginia and Kentucky. I believe that in no other district has there been displayed as general and long-continued an interest in the spiritual well-being of the Negroes."[8]

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[6] *Ben Davis told me the way he knew the age of a song was by the way it made him feel. "The old ones make you feel good, the new ones don't make you feel anything." I know of no better test.*

[7] *Where there was no gallery they sat in the rear of the church—if a separate service was not held for them.*

[8] *Olmstead also tells of a religious service held by the crackers in an isolated section south of Savannah. To this day such a service can be seen and heard in conservative Negro churches. It is significant that in the North white people were never encouraged to go into a Negro*

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175 These transplanted New Englanders were outstanding people, and undoubtedly made their influence felt in South Carolina just as it always has been in Georgia. The center of Revolutionary ideas was in their community at Midway. It sent two signers of the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia, and among its notables were six foreign missionaries and eighty-two ministers. When the British burned their church, during the Revolution, the members built another—in 1792—that was a replica of the Congregational churches seen throughout New England; and, when the parishes became counties after the Revolution, they called theirs Liberty County. Although the members of this church—organized in Massachusetts, removed to South Carolina, and then to Georgia—had been in the South for generations, their sympathies were clearly with their Northern co-religionists: their pastors came from New England and one of them was the Calvinist, the Reverend Abiel Holmes, father of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Under these conditions it is unlikely that they omitted the use of the *Bay Psalm Book*, published in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1640), of which the revised and enlarged edition of 1651 was called the *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testaments*. The first edition having been adopted by nearly every congregation in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, there is no reason to believe that it was any less popular with the God-fearing colonists who went to the Southern outposts. The slaves of the group of Puritans who had settled on the Ashley River probably sang *Spiritual Songs*[9] with their owners just as the slaves of their descendants at Midway undoubtedly did. In all likelihood the name "spiritual" struck the fancy of the Negroes, and accounts for its application to the songs of their own composition. Naturally enough these songs had little in common with the hymns sung with the white people, and were used only at such services as took place—apart from the slave-owners—during the week at prayer meeting held at the praise-house or the cabin of a deacon, or at a "settin'-up" or a funeral.

●(533) Before the year 1800 the old hymn book, which had gone through more than

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church, but in the South, they have always been welcomed—a survival of an earlier custom. If I had known this when I first went to St. Simon's I could have learned what I needed to find out without the delay to which I was subjected. But I was from the North—and was told nothing about the Negro. Before the first World War pushed the War Between the States into the background, anyone who hailed from New England was suspect if he showed an interest in the colored people. This attitude still exists in certain places on the South Carolina coast. To those who know the unsavory record of Northern carpet-baggers, such a situation is not surprising.

[9] *Before 1745. Spiritual Songs for Children, by J. Wright, was published by John Newbery.*

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175 fifty editions in less than a hundred years, gave way to the newer versions by Tate
● 533 and Brady and by Isaac Watts. Although I have been unable to find any points
of resemblance between Negro songs and those contained in the older collection,
I have found traces of the influence of Dr. Watts—but only in word combinations. A Watts hymn, sung to long metre, runs as follows:

> Broad is the road that leads to death and thousands walk together there
> But wisdom shows a narrow path with here and there a traveller.

Katie Brown on Sapelo sings the following version—but to a tune that bears no relation to any I have ever heard:

Narrow road is Heaven road
Believer I know
(539) With here and there a traveller
Believer I know
The broad road is Hell road
Believer I know
Thousand walk together there
Believer I know.

[177] It is self-evident that the Negro borrowed a word here, another there, whenever
it pleased him, and he probably did the same with a musical phrase. But as is said by those who heard his songs at their best, soon after the Civil War, the creation for the most part was his own. The surprising thing is that so much of the traditional music has survived.

It is just possible that the almost human will to live displayed by many of the
533 old songs has something to do with it. Frequently persons, who have heard the
singers the night before, telephone for the words of a song. The tune haunts them,
but without the verses they cannot give it expression. They have my sympathy.
533 I, too, have suffered in the same fashion, and been obliged in self-defense to
123 learn the songs. When I complained to Julia, my cook, of their torment, she answered: "They do us that way too, until we learn them." Susyanna, in teaching me "A'n' Jinny Hoe-cake," looked at me knowingly, and said: "You'll be singin' this tomorrow." I was. Cha'lotte, from Ragged Island—one of the Bahama group—also told me they got in her mind "like a worm" and gave her no peace. As can be seen, these songs have no regard for color.

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Unfortunately our system of notation is inadequate to interpret the Negro's traditional music. For this reason the writers who work in libraries and not in the field, and base their claim of preponderant white influence on book versions and on the singing of students in Negro schools, have the best of the argument. No matter how skillful a musician may be, he is hampered at the start because his interpretation is conditioned by his training and by the limitations imposed by our form of notation.[10] As for the singing of Negro students, it is a known fact that education and folk-music have never been compatible. Under such circumstances the advice given by Thomas P. Fenner in his preface to *Cabin and Plantation Songs,* written in 1873, is the best I know. He tells us "tones are frequently employed which we have no musical characters to represent. . . . It is of course impossible to explain them in words, and to those who wish to sing them, the best advice is that most useful in learning to pronounce a foreign language: *Study all the rules you please, then—go listen to a native.*" In addition to listening to a Negro, I would suggest writing down the words as sung—not as recited. With the best intention in the world the Negro

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[10] N. G. J. Ballanta, in an explanation of his idea of the need of a seventeen-tone octave to correctly express African music, tells us why the Western scale is unfit for use in African melodic expression. He believes that "a different system of tuning should be adopted to satisfy the demands of African musical expression, as the values given to notes tuned to equal temperament of twelve divisions to the octave, however much they may be of advantage to the western musician for his system of harmony, do not at all agree with the values given to those same diatonic steps when sung by the African. The same thing is true of Negroes in the United States whose singing of their native songs has a better effect when unaccompanied by the piano than when accompanied. . . .

"Theoretically speaking, Western musicians agree that there are seventeen different sounds in the octave to be provided for; but, by the system known as 'Enharmony,' two sounds are represented by one key known as the sharp and flat to adjacent keys."

Mr. Ballanta goes on to say that "the Africans employ Septimal Harmony in a great majority of cases and there is no reason why they should be made to give way to the Western system of tertian harmony by employing the present tuning of the piano."

In an address made some years ago, Mr. Ballanta stated that "The æsthetic value of the Spirituals arises from the fact that they are conceived and sung in harmony. This fact has baffled many musicians, as the folksongs of other peoples are conceived in unison. The reason is that the Negro in singing, as his African brother, thinks not of a scale which is simply a succession of individual tones, and which forms the basis of the folksongs of other people, but of a chord where there are three distinct and individual tones sounding at the same time, and in combination producing a harmonious effect."

This interesting explanation agrees with what W. E. Ward tells us in "Music of the Gold Coast" concerning the African's amazing ability to carry on "five simultaneous rhythms, the melody and four percussion parts." On St. Simon's Island, three simultaneous rhythms are quite common—the melody, hand clapping, and tapping of the feet or heels on the floor.

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533 126 never speaks the words of a song as he sings them.[11] To catch what is sung is difficult, but it is the only way that the tricky rhythm of a song can be learned. Any person who wishes to give an authentic presentation must be respectful of the older Negroes' disregard of our rules of spelling, pronunciation, and punctuation, and above all resist the temptation to use a formula. As the editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* say in their preface: "The remarks upon the dialect which follow have reference . . . almost exclusively to a few plantations at the northern end of St. Helena Island [South Carolina]. They will, no doubt, apply in a greater or less degree to the entire region of the southeasterly slave States, but not to other portions of the South. It should also be understood that the corruptions and peculiarities here described are not universal, even here. There are all grades, from the rudest field-hands to mechanics and house-servants, who speak with a considerable degree of correctness." These words apply perfectly to the types of dialect found on the Georgia coast, and explain the lack of consistency in the songs of this collection.

533 Few people realize that the slaves—like their African cousins—sang on every possible occasion. Religious ceremonies, as well as work and play, were all conducted to music. Naturally there were times when singing was a solo matter—as over the wash-tub—but the Negroes have always been gregarious (private life as we know it has never been popular among them), and it is no wonder their singing reflects this characteristic. In consequence it is particularly important to know how each of the two or three outstanding singers handles his contribution to the effect produced by the group. It seems to me that Creighton Churchill has succeeded admirably in conveying this idea—but as he frankly says, the whole problem is one of approximation. When it comes to reproducing peculiarities of African music and tones for which we have no symbols, we are out of luck. As Fenner indicates, the best we can do is to listen to an accredited singer.

Those who sing in the traditional manner never appear to take breath when

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[11] *Syllables are frequently divided arbitrarily to suit the rhythmic needs of a tune. Sometimes the last syllable of a word is attached to the one-syllable word that follows, and whole syllables are occasionally omitted. The slave disliked certain sounds in the English language.* Th *was difficult for him to pronounce, so was final* g, *and he dropped an* r *whenever it interfered with fluency. It is no wonder that a white man cannot compose an authentic slave song, for the transplanted African thought in the speech pattern of his native land, and employed his limited English in that fashion. He also disregarded genders as he did in Africa. On Hilton Head, South Carolina, the dialect of the Negroes sounds—at a little distance—like a foreign tongue because of its curiously different emphasis and intonation. Close at hand, however, the meaning becomes clear enough.* (194)

533 leading a religious song; a fact which makes it advisable, in writing down the words, to use as few punctuation marks as possible. The effect of an inexhaustible supply of breath is achieved through the simple expedient of the "basers"—as members of the chorus are called—"spelling" the leader, who gets his breath at the end of a narrative line while the chorus sings the response or the next line. In the old days, here, as in Africa, the virtuoso did not exist, and the basers played as important a part in group singing as the one who sang the leading lines. Now, however, there is a tendency to disregard the customary technique, which demands that the basers remain silent until the last word or two of the leader's narrative line is sung. In authentic slave music no nuances are observed,[12] but the absence of any variation in tone is not conspicuous when alternation between leader and chorus produces changes in volume. When the whole group sings in unison, however, the effect is extremely dull and monotonous.

533 114 178 177 One of the few trustworthy writers on the subject of Negro spirituals, Jeannette Robinson Murphy, could also sing them. It is regrettable that her book *Southern Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (1904) is out of print. In the section on "The Survival of African Music in America," she tells us: "During my childhood my observations were centered upon a few very old negroes, whose mothers and fathers came directly from Africa, and upon many others whose grandparents were African born, and I early came to the conclusion, based upon negro authority, that the greater part of their music, their methods, their scale, their type of thought, their dancing, their patting of feet, their clapping of hands, their grimaces and pantomime, and their gross superstitions came straight from Africa." Even at this late date, it is possible to find ex-slaves in remote spots on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia who can—if their confidence is won—substantiate practically every one of her conclusions. It cannot be done, however, by sitting peacefully in a library chair or spending a comfortable summer vacation on the campus of a Negro school. Writers from New England who have studied the songs of the Negro, mostly in libraries, are prone to emphasize the importance of book evidence. They do not appear to realize that their conclusions are valueless without work in the field among the children and grandchildren of native Africans—who are our only authorities.

As Carter Woodson truly says, the proof offered by the writers who claim a white origin for the Negro spirituals "would not pass the test of any research depart-

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[12] *A Negro quartet that sings in a staccato fashion, or renders the last verse of a song pianissimo shows clearly that it has taken its cue from the white man.*

533 ment of a real university." Mrs. Murphy goes on to say that "Some of their later
114 songs, it is true, we must technically call 'modified African,' but how far the original
177 song elements have been altered (and usually not for the better) by contact with
178 American life is a question of fact, and can only be settled by a careful comparison of the songs as sung among the natives of Africa and the changed forms in which their modified ones are found today in the South. It must be determined in each case, and cannot be settled by any general theory or formula. . . . The stock is African, the ideas are African, the patting and dancing are all African, and those who study this weird music at short range have no difficulty in recalling the . . . conditions that gave it birth."

533 Mrs. Murphy stresses the fact that the traditional way of singing slave spirituals must be learned in childhood when the voice is flexible, and—if you are to become proficient—you must listen to the older Negroes, preferably ex-slaves. Every characteristic she mentions is duplicated in the singing of the Negroes of the Georgia coast. As in South Carolina, they break every law of musical phrasing and notation, yet there is nothing to be found on the printed page to show how this is done. For instance, a prominent note is embellished with a variety of small notes which used to be called "trimmin's," tones are sung not found in our scale, humming is employed that is not easily transcribed, emphasis is placed—according to our ideas—where it does not belong, and one note is not left until the singer has a firm hold on the next—a method which produces the undulating effect that characterizes the genuine spirituals. The appearance of never taking breath,[13] already described, is another characteristic that must be observed in singing songs of this type. Unfortunately, the trick of dropping from a high note to a low one on a prolonged one-syllable word is less common than in my youth, but the arbitrary division of a monosyllable, and the placing of emphasis on the second half, are as popular as they ever were.

In our music, the accents generally fall on the stressed syllables of the spoken word and on the regular beats of the music, but as Natalie Curtis-Burlin tells us in *Negro Folk Songs* "the accents fall most frequently on the short notes and on the naturally unstressed beats, producing what we call 'syncopation' of a very intricate and highly-developed order. The peculiarity of this syncopation is best explained to the layman by drawing attention to the way in which the natural rhythms of the

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[13] As Mrs. Murphy says, the breath should be carried over "from line to line and verse to verse, even at the risk of bursting a blood vessel."

English language are distorted to fit the rhythm of Negro music: where the white man would sing, 'Go down, *Moses*,' the Negro chants, 'Go *down*, Moses' . . . .These identical accents are found in even the wordless vowel refrains of native African songs."

Many more questions will crop up than have been touched upon in this section, but I hope that the most important are answered in these explanatory words.

Lydia Parrish

St. Simon's Island, Georgia
December 1, 1941

533 since allegedly new "spirituals" keep turning up in many quarters. (Mrs. Parrish's
theory of the origin of this word is worthy of remark: that it was bestowed as
a result of the proselytizing of Puritans from Dorchester, Massachusetts, who
brought the Bay Psalm Book with them to Dorchester, South Carolina, with ensuing
consequences.) But are these fresh creations? Repeatedly, songs believed to
be new have proved to be songs well-known in some other place than the one in
which they were found. Thus it transpired, in the case of a certain "new" American
Negro song, that it was the precise equivalent of a chant well-known and still
heard in Africa! In this connection the background of African origins of American
Negro song, dance, religion, and ceremonial is of special interest, and a further
testimony to the soundness and the zeal with which the author has conducted her
121 investigations. Is it, then, that the singer who improvises, as he believes, in reality
533 draws subconsciously upon a deep well of racial experience and memory? The idea
is extremely suggestive. And if this should be the case, how far does the identical
principle apply to the acts of individually developed composers? Thus the peasant
Dvořák turns with much simplicity to Czech folk song for a musical expression
which is natural, rather naïve, and fresh and eloquent; while a Sibelius, a composer
of more subjective and complex mind, composes, as a young man, the *Kullervo*
Symphony, and then goes into the forests of Karelia and hears the Finnish peasants
singing the runes of the Kalevlaka in phrases similar, in spirit and contour, to the
ones from which he has made his score. One goes farther up the creative spiral,
and discovers the stylistic and spiritual qualities of the folk songs of races transmuted
in the music of a Mozart, a Beethoven, a Verdi, or a Wagner. In this sense the folk
song of a race is all-inclusive. It would then appear that however highly developed the
individual speech of a great composer, his expression, in proportion to its sincerity,
is in essence that of his forebears and his environment. It is important to bear this
533 aspect of Mrs. Parrish's studies in mind—important not only as it bears upon her
earnest and greatly needed effort to restore to its proper place in art the uncorrupted
song of the American Negro, but also in its bearing upon the cultural present and
future of the American people.

533 How significant the relationship is can be realized if in the first place we dispense
114 with the misleading and ridiculous theory that Negro religious music is an
imitation or variation of the hymns of the white. That is a most unfortunate product
of pedantry, sophism, or racial prepossession, as the case may be. It is a nonsense
which should long since have been dispersed by the plain evidence of ordinary hu-

533 114 man ears and the simplest intelligence. But it has stuck in various quarters, and been echoed by those willing to sit between library shelves—or not even in such learned quarters—and fit facts to prepossessions, or let others do their thinking for them.

Now if this were merely a doctrine and refuge for the narrow-minded, it would have done no particular harm to anyone but themselves. The unfortunate thing is the manner in which the doctrine is inculcated, in the name of education, in the mind of the Negro; and especially in the mind of the Negro teacher who must lead his own people to "enlightenment." What is to be said, not of that teacher, but of those who have taught him, or her, to say that, of course, if the Negro students in the class can't learn to sing their songs as they should—i.e., as ancestral tradition and spirit and style dictate—they must be "corrected." Anyone who has listened, first to the singing of Negroes naturally and inimitably expressing themselves in song, and then hearkened to the vitiated and Bowdlerized versions of these same songs, conventionally harmonized, rhythmed, and performed by a frocked Negro choir, will know without further inquiry the profound and inescapable difference between Negro folk music and the material it is supposed to emulate, and will say amen to the indignant words of Mrs. Parrish, to the effect that, while slavery of the body is terrible enough, slavery of the mind may be an even deeper wrong and a greater destruction.

533 One wonders, indeed, if the Negro composer can ever arrive who will reveal in an individual way the genius of his race, under these well-nigh insuperable obstacles to sound education and a liberating development. How is that composer to be freed, instead of inhibited, in the expression of what is within him? If such a development ever does occur, we as the American people will have evolved, for at least one phase of our expression, a music of new potencies and horizons, of which, as the author of this book observes, there is crying need in the whole world of sophisticated modern composition today. In the meantime, for the white musician as well as his darker colleague, it is of the utmost importance to realize the strength that there is in the product of Afro-American folk music, to conserve it in its original essence, and to understand its real values.

000 One can go farther. One can say that the principle involved has a vital bearing upon future cultural developments of the world after the present war. The optimists among us—and the writer is one of them—see in this conflagration, not only an end of at least some of the terrors which have held back the social development of

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Introduction

114 533 This book of Mrs. Parrish's is a singularly sincere and valuable contribution to the subject of Afro-American song. It is first-hand work with an excellent background. The data are the result of personal experience of Negro song at its sources. The approach is that of a writer who by fortunate circumstance was peculiarly equipped for her studies. Her first experience of the Negroes and their music was that of the girl in a Quaker community whose Abolitionist tendencies had made their locality first a station of the Underground Railroad in slave times, and later a haven where ex-slaves gathered and sang. The vitiating influence of the white teacher bent upon uplifting and de-racing the Negro was not to be felt where the blacks greatly outnumbered the whites, and where the whites, being Quakers, gave music a wide berth in their religious services, permitting the Negro to sing his songs in his own native and unashamed way. Nor, until the eighties, were these singers made self-conscious or musically corrupted by the sophisticated Negroes of the near-by city. They were heard by a young girl at the most impressionable period of her life. The quality of the original songs and the way they were sung left indelible memories.

Many years later, Mrs. Parrish found herself the chatelaine of a home on St. Simon's Island on the coast of Georgia, in a district which proved a veritable sanctuary of Afro-American music, and from which her investigations branched out into neighboring territories of the coasts and islands of Georgia and South Carolina, eventually reaching the Bahamas and Haiti. It is probable that the first slaves transported to America were landed near the place which became her Southern home. The beginnings of one of the most mysterious and fruitful amalgamations of racial musical elements that music knows may well have been here.

533 How old are these folk songs? And are they still being produced? This last is a question of great importance, and not only where this one issue is concerned. The answer concerns the entire evolution of the musical art. Mrs. Parrish believes that the body of the American Negro's music accumulated within a period, roughly, of one hundred and fifty years. There are those who would dispute this statement,

000 the entire human race and the nations thereof, but a burning up of the rubbish of an ideology based upon the conception of racial ascendency. That dark and medieval doctrine is not as new as it may seem, or as old as to have faded from the subconscious of the most advanced peoples today. In a large degree, at least, it is going to go. It is going by the board, as these lines are written, in February of 1942, after Pearl Harbor, and after the fall, so perilously near extinction of white supremacy in the Far East, of Singapore. Other peoples than the English-speaking nations, with that hitherto immovable conviction of superiority—which they shared with western Europe—are going to take a hand, and a powerful one, following the debacle of totalitarianism, in the liberated expressions of peoples. That is going to affect art, greatly to its advantage. The deep, but narrow, chauvinistic, and exhausted cultures of a few small nations have come to the end, at least temporarily, of their creative resources. New blood, new spirit is needed, and history is seeing to it that, under the most tragic circumstances, it is being supplied. These processes will also apply to America, and to the very essential broadening of our perspectives, and our half-conscious, extremely costly emergence from slavery of many kinds—and perhaps to confinements of mind, which have made so difficult and so rare American creative achievement in music. Let emancipation, of a real and not an affected or sentimental kind—but a real emancipation of ideas and of culture—begin at home.

533 177 It is, however, not to be assumed from the foregoing, any more than from Mrs. Parrish's pages, that in acknowledging the unique and unparalleled contribution of the Negro, we can overlook or minimize the white influences which have contributed to the quality of his song. Clearly and incontrovertibly, the "spiritual"—as other types of Afro-American folk music—is of Negro origin. No white composer or hymnal has produced anything like it. At the same time, such a music would never have come into existence if the Negro had not been brought here in bondage, with all the concomitant emotional, religious, and artistic consequences of that tragic experience.
533 Here is a fusion of spiritual and musical forces not to be duplicated in the music of any other land—and this though all folk music, as it evolves through the centuries, is to be found to consist of the interweaving of various racial and melodic elements. But in no other folk music than America's is there to be discovered such a collision of dissimilar forces as in this American blend. Nor has there materialized such a product in any other country where whites and blacks assembled. Special types of folk song predominate in the most isolated communities, just as the folk songs of the British Isles have existed, uncontaminated, and for centuries, in isolated

● 533 mountain districts of America. In other lands a long evolutionary process of centuries shaped melodic idioms that sprang from the soil. In America a special thing happened, which neither scientist, anthropologist, nor music critic has ever explained. The phenomenon is not to be dismissed as either accidental or unimportant, but to be studied in all its bearings upon our progress.

533 128 126 This is a direction in which the author of the following pages is working with a modesty and unassuming conviction and purpose which need no praise. She is materially aided in her research by Mr. Churchill's transcribing of the songs. He has worked with a fidelity to the originals only conditioned by the limitations of our standardized scale and the inexactitude of our notation. The songs cannot be put down, exactly as they are sung, on paper. But these are the songs, as near as may be. They offer highly illuminative exposition of the various balances and amalgamations of racial elements of both African and American origin. Some of them are more (177) than a little barbaric. In others the white influence is clear, if not predominant. In sum, these notations represent a fragment of a song literature that is unique among the expressions of mankind.

000 The rest is for the reader. The quality of this book, not that of a partisan, or reformer, or *ex cathedra* musicologist, is that of a seeker of the truth through the human contacts which lie at the basis of living art.

Olin Downes

New York City
February 16, 1942

CHAPTER ONE

Concerning Slave Songs and Their Preservation

533 Where did they come from? Who composed them? How old are they? These are the questions repeatedly asked by Northern guests on hearing the little-known slave songs. But I have searched libraries, North and South, without finding the answers. The reason is simple: no one knows enough about the African side of the songs to write authoritatively concerning it, and their beginnings in this country are so obscure that one man's guess is as good as another's. This lack of knowledge, however, does not prevent guesses—both good and bad—from being made.

533 177 178 The birthplace of the songs is conceded to be the Old South, and they are found nowhere else except where introduced—as in the Bahamas—by the slaves of loyalists from the mainland;[1] but the honor of their creation, as indicated in the first half of their name, Afro-American, goes definitely to the Negro, for they represent the genius of the early slaves who combined the complicated rhythms of Africa with the more highly developed melodies of the Colonial planters.

To be sure, native Africans studying music in this country question the justice of the share of credit allotted them by the hyphen, for they consider the songs to be preponderantly Negro. Nordics are no better satisfied. They as firmly believe that the slave composers were nothing more than plagiarists—and in the way of phrase-lifting, they were. These alien people were under the necessity of learning a foreign language in a few months, but it is a recognized fact that no white man can turn a phrase with the same pithy economy as the Negro, and none has ever composed—to my knowledge—a successful imitation of a Negro song. What neither claimant appears to recognize is this: without the remarkable musical gift and deeply religious nature of the African slave, there would have been no soul-stirring sacred songs. On 533 177 the other hand, without the contact with Western music and the inspiration provided by the Bible—at the hands of the slave-owners—these selfsame songs might

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[175] [1] *In all likelihood they were also carried to Liberia in 1820 by the transplanted American slaves.*

533 177 never have come into existence. Like those that accompany the primitive African dance called the "ring-shout," they might have continued to be primarily concerned with rhythm, which represents Africa's idea of music, just as melody represents ours. Rhythm, in fact, may well be called the heart-beat of true Negro music, for it is based upon the natural beat of the pulse and its even division of tempo.

533 The question as to the identity of the composers of these songs lends itself to a more definite answer, from the accepted fact that folksongs everywhere represent the voice of a people rather than the creation of any one person. Those of the Negro are no exception.

Many Negro preachers and evangelists claim the composition of certain modernized "ballets" [2] and spirituals, but on investigation, their assertions prove to be based upon the composition of new verses rather than new tunes—all of which fits the idea that folk melodies are traditional, and are looked upon as common property. The African technique may also account for the inability of the white man to sing like the Negro. The latter clearly possesses an intuitive knowledge of the songform of Africa which enables him to weave polyphonic effects into familiar songs, and to follow acceptably a leader in those he has never heard before. In the old days his gift was such that he could sing extemporaneously—like a bird—on any and every occasion. Without a system of notation, however, we have no means of knowing how much credit was due the creative ability of the individual singer, and how much belonged to communal tradition. The word of white musicians who have recognized in Africa the ancestors of such songs as "I Ain' Got No Fr'en' in This Worl' but the Lord" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" also obliges us to be skeptical of claims of any kind—oral or printed, individual or sectional—as to their composition.

A few years ago a Northern Negro composer made the assertion that "new spirituals are born every day." The news was widely publicized, but he was unfortunate in his choice of an example: the words he gave in illustration belonged to a song that was popular on the coast of Georgia long before he was born. Recently I saw in print that "Ride on, Conquering King" was first sung on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Perhaps it was, yet the fact would be difficult to prove for the song is known throughout the southeastern states and in the Bahamas. Until we are more familiar with the distribution of these songs, and until we know more about the great store of folk music said to exist in Africa, it behooves us to be wary of making positive statements, unless we deliberately choose this method of getting at the truth

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[2] Ballads. *In the seventeenth century, the two words were often confused.*

533 through the corrections that are likely to follow—which may perhaps be a quicker way.

As already mentioned, the lack of a system of musical signs is a serious handicap which interferes with a better knowledge of the authentic slave songs, and 533 175 makes any estimate of their age pure guesswork. Nevertheless, we do know that twenty blacks from Guinea were sold from a Dutch man-of-war to the tobacco planters of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Sometime between that date and, let us say, 1760, these songs probably assumed the characteristics they now bear, for they appear to have become as crystallized by 1776 as folksongs ever are. But unless old church or family records turn up describing the musical reaction of the slaves to their owners' interest in the salvation of their souls, we are unlikely to find out when, how, or where the songs originated.

533 The slave songs or "ant'ems,"[3] as they were sometimes called in Georgia before the Civil War and are called in the Bahamas to this day, may have resulted from a spark of divine fire; and the blacks, like so much tinder, may have carried them far and wide through the agency of the slave markets or the removal of the planters from one state to another. Then again, they may have been the outcome of nothing more than an elaboration of simple African themes under the influence of the richer harmonies of the Colonial planters. In other words, the tunes may represent a gradual development over a period of a hundred and fifty years, rather than a full-blown inspiration.

175 533 For all we know, the songs may have originated in Virginia, for there were two hundred thousand blacks in the state at the time of the first census in 1790. It is possible, however, that South Carolina provided the nursery, as the majority of the Negroes in the coastal section of that state and Georgia who today sing primitive "shout" songs and spirituals are Baptists, and Charleston was one of the first proselyting centers of that denomination in the Colonies between 1684 and 1746. It is on record that the zealous efforts of William Screven caused the Baptist principles to be "widely disseminated throughout that region" and the preponderance of Negro Baptists in all the Low Country of South Carolina and Georgia indicates the success of his activities. But we have only historical data to bolster up any of these suppositions, and the chances are that details concerning the origin of the songs will never be learned.

[3] *Old English for anthem. Diana, from Turk's Island, B. W. I., snorted when I called "Study War No Mo'" and "Who Built the A'k?" spirituals. "Them's not spirituals, them's ant'ems!"*

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Evidence of their pre-Revolutionary existence found in Professor C. L. Edwards' *Bahama Songs and Stories* led me to several of the out islands for the purpose of verification. I discovered that Professor Edwards' book included many tunes and verses still sung, though not consecutively, throughout the "Black Border" of South Carolina and Georgia—a fact explained by the author when he says: "The first settlements were in some cases made by families of loyalists who fled from the American colonies during the Revolution." Miss Mary Moseley, in her *Bahama Handbook*, states that the number of whites and Africans was about equal before the arrival of the American loyalists with their slaves—an influx which doubled the white and trebled the Negro population. Elsewhere, Miss Moseley tells us that the slaves numbered from six to seven thousand, and that the Caicos Islands were originally settled by loyalist refugees from Georgia. Stark's *History of the Bahamas* gives further information about the Georgia contingent: "At the close of the American Revolutionary War, twelve families of loyalists settled here with from two to three hundred slaves; previous to that time there was not more than thirty acres of land cleared in all the Caicos." [4]

Such references explain why "much community of both poetical and musical phrase" came to exist between the songs given in Professor Edwards' collection and those found in sections from which the loyalists fled at the time of the Revolution. In H. E. Krehbiel's *Afro-American Folksongs*, their common origin appears to be overlooked in the assertion that the Bahama songs "show a higher development than do the slave songs of the States"—a fact which is undeniably true of those found in books, but not of those that have escaped, through isolation, the corrupting influence of such Western music as the Negroes usually hear.

The remoteness of the Bahama out islands accounts for the preservation of the genuine eighteenth-century Negro melodies; and on one of the islands may still be heard the tune that accompanied the "ring-play" called "Emma, You My Darlin'," done on their knees—forty years ago—by the barefooted Negro children of St. Simon's Island. How this game song as well as many of the religious songs given in *Bahama Songs and Stories* came to exist on such widely separated islands as those of the Bahama group and St. Simon's may be explained by local history in two ways.

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[4] *Diana, from Turk's Island, told me one of the Caicos Islands was near her old home. Her sister lives there, and I could get plenty of "ant'ems" from her. Bethell, in* The Early Settlers of the Bahamas, *lists the names of one quarter of the two thousand loyalists who took up land on the various islands of the group.*

175 The first possibility is that they arrived in both places from the mainland of South
533 Carolina. In 1795, a few years after the exodus of South Carolina and Georgia loyalists to the Bahamas, Major Pierce Butler gave up his estate on the Ashley River near Charleston and established about eight hundred slaves on his rice plantation on Butler's Island and his near-by cotton plantation on the "North End" of St. Simon's. Or the songs may have come from Savannah, via Nassau, with the entourage of Captain Alexander Wylly, a loyalist, who was obliged to flee from Georgia to the Bahamas immediately following the Revolution. However, when England began to consider the abolition of slavery in her colonies, this gentleman—who apparently had slaves to lose—became indignant and returned to Georgia. After he had fought against his friends and relations and suffered exile, it seemed outrageous to him that he should be robbed of his property. The fact that a thriving trade existed at that time between Nassau and Darien, only a few miles—by water—north of St. Simon's, and the ease with which he could transport his family and his belongings to this island, probably account for his choosing it as a final resting-place.

In addition to the circumstantial proof of the age of the songs given by history, there is also evidence of continuity of development in the singing of such old Bahama Negroes as Elvira Albury of Harbor Island, born in 1849, and Isabella Bean of Eleuthera, born before 1860, and of such centenarians as Liverpool, born on St. Simon's in 1828, and Janey Jackson, also born on St. Simon's in 1826—to say nothing of Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County in 1844. At the same time it would be reassuring to have more references in books concerning the character of the songs of the slaves. William Bartram provides in a brief passage in his *Travels* the only eighteenth-century description of Negro music I have been able to find.[5] Apparently he was favorably impressed with what he heard and saw on a model plantation in Georgia, on the banks of the Savannah River. In a description of life on board a slave ship that occurs in *Captain Canot, or Twenty Years of an African Slaver* (1827–1847), there is presented in the following words a pleasanter picture of the Middle Passage than is usually given us: "During afternoons of serene weather, men, women, girls, and boys are allowed while on deck to unite in African melodies which they always enhance by an extemporaneous tom-tom on the bottom of a tub or tin kettle." This short paragraph contains the only admission I have seen in ante-bellum books that the slaves brought their "melodies" with them. (Illustration 6). A

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[5] *"The sooty sons of Africa, forgetting their bondage, in chorus sung the virtues and beneficence of their master in songs of their own composition."* (April, 1776)

A, [For Illustration 6, see Category 142, plate facing p. 33--Analyst]

175 533 Of all the descriptions of slave music that have come down to us, there is none to equal in closeness of observation those given by Fanny Kemble in her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation.* The fact that she was a musician as well as an actress no doubt accounts for the keenness of her perception.[6] The lines that follow have been so widely quoted that I hesitate to give them again, yet it would be unfair to leave them out of such an account as this, since they apply so perfectly to the singing of the descendants of the very slaves who inspired them.

"The high voices all in unison, and the admirable time and true accent with which their responses are made, always make me wish that some great musical composer could hear these . . . performances. With a very little skillful adaptation and instrumentation, I think one or two barbaric chants and choruses might be evoked from them that would make the fortune of an opera."

Although Liverpool, the last of the Pierce Butler slaves, claimed to remember his former mistress, her anti-slavery views[7]—voiced to the slaves and the free alike—clearly fell on deaf ears, for the patriarchal Negro lost no opportunity to tell what a fine master he had, and when explaining that he was "Butler born," he invariably added, "an' Butler I shall be until I die." Seated on the whiffletree bar of his ox cart, (Illustration 4)[A] accompanied by a few descendants of other Butler slaves, this Negro with the courtly dignity of the Old South gave such a dramatic demonstration of ante-bellum singing for the benefit of his Maussa's granddaughter, Lady Butler, as the actress herself would have approved. With whole-hearted fervor and more accuracy and sweetness of tone than one would have expected from a centenarian, Liverpool proved what I have so often noticed: that primitive Negro music is more dependent upon the perfection of its rhythm and the precision that a good leader can inspire in the responses of the chorus, than upon the virtuosity of the individual.

In the Negroes' lack of concern for mere sweetness of sound as an end—with their major interest invariably shown in rhythm, in the melodic balance of a song, and in the performance of the group as a whole—can be seen the same fundamental approach as is displayed in primitive African sculpture. Some examples, dug up by
000 Leo Frobenius at Ife, on the Niger River, are believed by him to belong to the tenth century. This date is of interest in giving an idea of the age of the African cul-

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[6] *It is unfortunate, however, that her capacity for self-identification led her astray when the atrocity tales told by her husband's slaves aroused her emotions.*

[7] Her Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838–39, was first published, *for purposes of propaganda*, in 1863.

A. [For Illustration 4, see Category 142, plate facing p. 32--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

000 tural movement and its works of art which have had such profound influence upon
the art of the West in the last thirty years; which produced the talking drums, and
developed rhythm to a point "two centuries ahead of Europe." [8] It is also significant
that the art critics who write concerning the primitive sculpture of Africa call atten-
tion to the manner in which the best examples conform to canons that are universal
and, according to Louis Carré, apply with equal force to European classic art. It is
● 533 clearly no matter of accident that the Negroes who composed the Afro-American slave songs came from the very section of Africa which has yielded the finest specimens of sculptural art. Nor can it be considered a coincidence that musicians trained in the tradition of the "three B's" should marvel at the extraordinary feeling for rhythm and musical form shown in the slave compositions—"built on a foundation as solid as that of Bach," as one of them remarked after hearing the Negro singers of St. Simon's.

There seems to be no answer to the question of where the race got its intuitive knowledge of music (which musicians admit is acquired by white students only after years of study) unless we accept the theory advanced by Gobineau, the celebrated French Orientalist, that "the source from which the arts have sprung is concealed in the blood of the blacks"—with the concomitant conclusion that Ham must have been the musically gifted member of Noah's family.

So much for an historical outline of a form of music that is said by Franklin Harris, the composer, to be as distinctive and individual as any in the world.[9] But what of its status today and its chance of survival?

Thirty years ago, when I first visited the coast of Georgia, I would have said it hadn't a ghost of a chance. But now, after seeing what persistence, plus a little money has accomplished, I am still not so sure—although I am still certain that those with any interest whatsoever in this music must do more than they have in the past to keep it alive.

122 When I arrived on St. Simon's in 1912, the stillness of the Negroes was
533 puzzling until questioning brought out the fact that the island was a summer resort,
(101) and contact with city whites and their black servants had had its numbing influ-
ence; that the old-time singing had gone out of style, and spirituals weren't sung any
123 more. After three musically barren winters I discovered, however, that a few Negroes

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126 [8] *In the words of W. E. Ward. For the complete quotation, see page 19.*

533 [9] *Call it "hybrid" if you will—but a name cannot alter its right to recognition.*

123 126 533 remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that: making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its door.

868 533 All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13,A) to the younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25.)B Where death has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with distinction.

533 177 178 But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful attitude of those Negro school-teachers [10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be said to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" Europeanized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as "The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are substituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie" —for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remembered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musical taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to 177 178 hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

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[10] At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor loftily informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."

A. [For Illustration 13, see Category 84, plate facing p. [illegible]--Analyst]
B. [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. [illegible]--Analyst]

000 where records of London music-hall ditties are preferred to the folksongs of the native. It is a discouraging sign of the times to find quantities of sentimentalized spirituals listed in foreign record catalogues side by side with songs of African natives. It does seem as though we have come to a pretty pass when the Negro, who sings a spiritual as only a Negro can, is determined to sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the white man, who sings a Brahms song to perfection, is equally determined to sing "Roll, Jordun, Roll." What a contrary world we live in!

533 177 178 But a clue to the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the rural Negro has always taken his cue from the white folks at the "Big House." If they favor and enjoy the slave songs, it may be that he is not so far wrong after all, in cherishing his heritage in the face of jeers from the "style" leaders of his community. Such being the case, the future of the old-time music evidently rests in the hands of the landed gentry of the South. Their influence is quite as potent as it was in the days "befo' de wa'," and in view of this fact and the known conservatism of the majority of the middle-aged rural Negroes, the prestige that plantation owners can give means the difference between extinction and conservation.

In consequence, I never lose an opportunity to beg the coöperation of those who are in a position to lend an encouraging hand. There is no need to do more than allow the Negroes to provide entertainment in the manner that was usual on many ante-bellum estates. The justification for such a positive statement is found in the efficacy of this very method on the coast of Georgia. No one has better reason than I to know what the interest of certain plantation owners has meant in the preservation of Negro music. For years the "Big Boss" of Sapelo Island [12] did much to increase its prestige. At Hofwyl Plantation, the devotion of the owners to the religious slave songs has made their neighborhood a veritable oasis of Afro-American music; and at The Ridge, "Miss Sis'," [13] as she was affectionately called, did splendid work in encouraging the survival of the ring-shout—although she characteristically disclaimed any credit. In addition, the applause of Northern audiences at Sea Island and at the Cabin has produced a striking change in the attitude of our Negroes toward their music.

535 If you are interested in African survivals and have a Negro community on or near your property, all you need do (provided you live in a remote district and are generous with your silver) is to let it be known that you wish to see such solo

[12] *The late Howard E. Coffin.*
[13] *Mrs. W. E. Clifton*

535 (243) (412) (171) dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!")—and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa (Illustrations 7 and 8).A The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require the aid of rhythmic songs.

535 533 (177) There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of African play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is often found in the religious songs.

533 One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and water.[14]

535 533 539 In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies—is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the simplest of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

533 In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you to get down on your knees and pray. 535 171 On one of the old Heyward plantations bordering on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival) which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

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[14] *"Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.*

A. [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

000 excitement that may lead to such exaltation as few white people ever see. It is an unforgettable experience, rare in these days of practical religion when all mirac are scientifically explained.

● 533 I notice that men are particularly partial to the work songs, of which the shanties [16] of the black stevedores are the most amusing. When a plantation is near a navigable river or salt water, songs like "Stevedore's in trouble, Carry 'im to the Aly-mo," and "Sandyanna" may possibly be heard. Both carry in their titles the date of their inception, and obviously hark back to the period of the Mexican War. Others bring in Australia and Rio along with "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla Gal–Go 'round the Horn" and suggest the period of the windjammer.

At The Mills on the west side of St. Simon's–in the eighteen-eighties–the Inland Waterway was filled with sailing vessels from all parts of the world.[17] These were loaded with lumber that had been floated down the Altamaha; but, as Cap'n Joe, the crew leader, says, so little lumber moves these days that the songs that helped the stevedores to handle the great "sticks" are well-nigh forgotten. A pity to let one of them be lost.

[184] Then there are the "rags," the "fiddle" or "sinful" songs. These may be plentiful in the interior; but on the coast, where the Negroes are apparently more religious, they have been the most difficult to locate.

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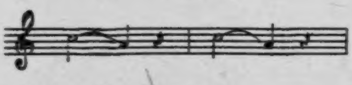
198 Where there are wide fields, musical half-yodeled calls often bring " 'sponse from laborers a mile away. When a field needs to be burned over, a sail is flapping idly, or rice is to be fanned, you may hear a Negro "calling the wind": "Co' win'! Co' win'! Co'! Co'!" A prolonged whistle follows:



–in the African manner of calling the rain.[18]

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534 If a plantation is sufficiently remote, and the owner is ultra-modern in his taste, such a jazz band may be organized as has not been heard in many a year. It is only necessary to call for the services of those who can still "rap the bones" (real bones of a thickness and length suitable for manipulation between the middle fingers,

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[16] *Or chanteys–as some prefer to call them.*
[17] *Julia Armstrong tells me they were lined up "like sardines in a box."*
[18] *A gramophone record of a Togoland rain invocation is astonishingly similar.*

533 534 which produce an effect similar to that of castanets), or play upon the well-seasoned and polished "old jawbone" of some ox, horse, or mule [19] with the aid of a blacksmith's rasp or a large key (a rhythmic tooth-rattling performance), or extract music (of a kind) from the U-shaped iron clevis used for hitching horses to the old-fashioned plow—which, when suspended by a string and beaten upon with its pin, makes a very fair "tr'angle," as the ante-bellum Negroes called it. If you live in the neighborhood of a cane-brake, there may be an old Negro who can demonstrate the kind of music to be obtained from a set of reed-pipes, called "quills," made from graduated lengths of cane tightly wedged into a frame. On occasion, a washboard—played with a thimble—and a frying pan may be added. Now and then a fiddle, "box" (guitar), mouth-organ, or jew's harp is heard in rural districts, but rarely a drum—except in the hands of musically illiterate members [20] of the Sanctified Church who have done as much real harm to the Negro's innate gift of rhythm as have the white man's hymn books.

In New Orleans, wooden horns and home-made drums (made out of nail kegs), with skin tightly stretched over one end, were used in olden times, but were forbidden on plantations where the blacks outnumbered the whites. Planters were
(202) well aware of the ability of some of their slaves to use them in the same manner as we use the Morse code,[21] and it was not considered safe to risk the general uprising which might have resulted.

533 The good-natured ingenuity of the Negroes in circumventing plantation rules speaks well for their ready wit, and it always rouses my admiration to see the way in which the McIntosh County "shouters" tap their heels on the resonant board floor [22] to imitate the beat of the drum their forebears were not allowed to have. Those who hear the records of the musical chants which accompany the ring-shout—made for me by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner—cannot believe that a drum is not used, though how the effect is achieved with the heels alone—when they barely leave the floor—remains a puzzle (Illustration 24).[A]

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[19] *It may even be decorated with ribbons, as in the old days.*

[20] *Joe Loman once said, "The Sanctified people must think God is deef, they make so much noise."*

(195) [21] *In 1740, following the Stono uprising of 1739, the great slave act was passed. One section prohibited the beating of drums or the blowing of horns, although in cities this provision was not rigidly observed.*

(191) [22] *I am told, however, that in South Africa the natives use their heels on the sun-baked clay of the village square in precisely the same manner.*

A. [For Illustration 24, see Category 535, plate facing p. 144--Analyst]

533 If the black tenants on a plantation surprise its owner with the finish of their
545 performance, he may feel inclined to organize a society, put the entertainments they give on a more permanent basis, and hold singing contests between members of different churches, denominations, communities, plantations, or counties, as was done in our section.

Years ago I found it expedient to form the Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia, and in 1934 to organize another society, called The Plantation Singers, which specializes in secular songs. This was done to help restore the prestige which the slave songs once enjoyed. Friends generously gave trophies for each type of folksong, and both societies have accomplished precisely what it was hoped they would. Only vouched-for singers of the old songs are eligible for membership, and their names are enrolled in a record book. Buttons, with the name of the society around the rim, have been given out to well-nigh a thousand singers along the Coastal Highway, from the Ogeechee River to the Florida line. These buttons proclaim to the world that the men, women, and children who wear them are proud to sing the old songs. There is nothing like the weight of numbers to add importance to any movement! Big "Star Singer" buttons distinguish the leaders, and provide the incentive needed to overcome shyness, and to bring them into the limelight.
[434] Incidentally, in the division of the proceeds—every penny of which goes to the Negroes—the leaders are given twenty-five or fifty cents more than the basers.

533 The particular value of our "sings" lies in the likelihood of impressing a large
545 number of Negroes with the high regard in which their music is held by white
177 people of importance. In 1934, the annual festival at the Sea Island Casino brought out an audience of over three hundred. It is readily seen that one hundred and twenty-five singers, from Negro communities a hundred miles apart, can act as missionaries in carrying word to their neighbors of how the white folks behave when they want a song repeated, of how they sometimes yell: "Bravo! Bravo!"—whatever that means—and that they pay real money to hear Negroes sing.

Except on one occasion, it has always been possible to send the singers home
533 with a dollar in the hand and their transportation paid. At the festival, held during
545 the dark days of the bank moratorium of March, 1933, the singers were thankful
[434] to get fifty cents, food, and all expenses. That was a memorable night. A tall Negro from Broadfield—making the "Sign of the Judgment" with uplifted arm—led the
[187] sixty swaying singers in the shout: "Can't Hide." They began to move quietly, as

533 in a trance, and it was soon evident, from a peculiar heart-clutching quality in the
545 rhythm, that they were "possessed" by it. Song followed song, and the spell was not
787 broken. Some in the audience wept, others applauded, but the Negroes appeared unaware of their surroundings. Several middle-aged Southerners said it was the first time they had seen the Negroes "get happy." Although the performance was
(539) strictly decorous, I was frankly relieved when the participants came to earth, after a third call for:

My God is a rock in a weary lan'
  A weary lan', 'n a weary lan'
  A weary lan', I know He's a rock 'n a weary lan'
  Shelter in a time of storm.[22]

000 What the future holds for this music—the only distinctive form, besides that of the Indian, that has been developed in America—remains to be seen. If plantation owners will lend a hand and provide the rural singers with appreciative audiences, the chances are that it will survive and enable the younger generation of composers—to whom I notice it has a particular appeal—to utilize it as a stepping stone for further development. Melody and harmony, instead of being stressed as they now are in Negro colleges, will fall into line with rhythm and architectural form which formerly characterized the music of the slave. The result may perhaps be a new type of music—of which there is serious need. The classic system, through being confined to the development of one musical form to the exclusion of all others, is clearly in need of rejuvenation. Such was the case with the plastic arts in the first two years of the twentieth century, when the primitive sculpture of the African Negro provided the necessary stimulation. It is freely admitted that there is a cloud over the music world today; and writers of music, in their struggle to create something original, are moving from the library to the laboratory in search of new notes, new scales, new tonalities, new harmonies. I would suggest going farther afield, and trying out what Africa has to offer. It is a curious fact, however, that musicians are not adventurous, and few wander far from the beaten track. According to W. E. Ward, who has lived for years in Africa and has made a particular study of its music, that of the West Coast has many more tricks than the one or two obvious ones which have been utilized by Tin Pan Alley. Present-day composers might advantageously follow the lead he indicates.

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[22] *An indication of the chastened spirit of the audience.*

000 In a series of articles on Gold-Coast music in the *London Musical Times* (1932), Mr. Ward says:

> Africans are at least as musical as any race in Europe, possibly more musical than any. . . . Their harmony is as far developed as European harmony in the sixteenth century; it sounds very different, but it is not inferior. And in rhythm Africa is two centuries ahead of Europe. Their music is the most alive of any of their arts, and shows no sign of dying; new songs are constantly appearing, and quickly spread over the country. Whether it will survive the attack of bad Western music and the sapping of tribal institutions and religion, with which it is intimately connected, remains to be seen; ultimately music is threatened by the same dangers as other African arts, though it seems likely to resist more strongly. But if it could learn from Europe modern developments in form and harmony, African music should grow into an art as magnificent as any that the world has yet seen.

533 171 The relationship of our slave music to that of the African Negro is such that what is said of one applies in the main to the other. This fact gives particular weight to the authoritative words of Mr. Ward.

533 177 178 It seems to me that the ultimate fate of this music rests with the owners of Southern plantations and with those who mold public taste through radio programs. Within the last year, there are indications that up-to-date young Negroes are beginning to appreciate the authentic slave songs; and the increasing popularity of exotic African tones and rhythms among white people leads me to believe that the pendulum of taste is swinging toward the music of Africa and away from the European preponderance of melody and harmony. In this trend lies a ray of hope for the survival of the contribution made by the Afro-American slave.

181 their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many
177 wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I
567 notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings"
123 at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same procedure.
● 533 The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as
181 jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the
181 situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing something
177 that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or
(123) indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

181 Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to consider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned
177 by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[6] It seems to me that the attitude of the
152 whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade
186 their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

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[6] *Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.*

342 796 782 (778) (777) Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song, followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustration 12), Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was not blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 (123) (754) [533] In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration (Illustration 14), it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our 342 777 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming, except to bring good luck.

787 763 Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in occult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

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[171] [30] *A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."*

A. [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B. [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

Another example of this knack of using the one right word was furnished me when I gave a "lift" to a Negro going my way. I asked where he wanted to get out. He replied casually: "Oh, jus' let me out at Lord Bing's." Although I use a fictitious surname, there is only one Negro on the island who could possibly qualify for the title.

142 144 There is, I believe, a biological reason for Lord Bing's feeling of importance. He is the living image of one of several bronze heads dug up in 1938 at Ife in Southern Nigeria, and believed to be portraits of rulers, kept as a record.[38] William Bascom, who was in Ife at the time of the discovery of these heads, says (in an article in the *Illustrated London News* [39] which should be reprinted in this country): "It is possible to identify the exact counterparts of these heads among the people of Ife today. Also, interestingly enough, striking resemblances between some of the heads and individual Negroes of the United States have been noticed. A large proportion of the ancestors of American Negroes are, indeed, known to have come from this region of West Africa." Members of Lord Bing's own family exclaim at the likeness (Illustrations 18 and 19),A and it is clear that he is a "throw-back" mentally and physically. In addition, the Yoruba tribe, to whom the people of Ife belong, are said by N. G. Ballanta, in "Music of the African Races," [40] to have the most highly artistic dance songs of all the tribes he investigated from the Senegal to the Cameroon. It is significant that this St. Simon's Negro is a good singer, and belongs to the family that has given me the most help in the preservation of the characteristic African rhythms. • [533]

538 171 Although the West Africans were not supposed to have a literature because of their lack of a written language—except in a few tribes—the tales brought to America by the slaves have entertained old and young, black and white, whenever and

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[38] *Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.*

[39] "*The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Donatello,*" April 8, 1939.

[40] West Africa, June 14, 1930.

A, [For Illustratio[illegible] 18 & 19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed
itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity
for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative in-
stinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia
planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—al-
[171] ways were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of
work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to dis-
● [533] cover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were ap-
pointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves
326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial
171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that compar-
atively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account
certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence
of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is
obvious.

George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who
567 could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton
322 press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying
out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro
567 slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented
335 him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it
342 said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing
curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Inca-
567 chee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for
326 holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in
the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechan-
ics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet-
322 makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of
[335 Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21).A Both made a
461] number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length.
[171] These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate
that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and
461 greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the
517

A, [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

461 517 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in mind that *Art for Art's sake* never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this [177] attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

533 17 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of re- 533 114 17 search employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

African Songs

533 191

FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind abqut de t'ing." [51]

[177] The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

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[51] *Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.*

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(177)

from the tune (all but the exclamatory phrase show the influence of the white man's hymns), this is what I got:

(539)

Freewillum!
Gwine home to sine de oshun.
Relig-jun to-d'-New Jerusalem-I-bring-good-news-a-tatta-ho!
My soul sine de oshun.

The third line is extraordinary. Following fast on "New Jerusalem," the words run together up the scale into a falsetto squeak ending abruptly on "ho!" exactly as would be expected of songs from Africa. When a group of Negro school-children heard Rogers sing it, they went into spasms of laughter—and they had good cause, for the song is astonishingly strange.

2. ROCKAH MH MOOMBA

The second of Dublin's songs has few words that could pass for English, but, like several of the shouts, it ends with a stamp. The tune is not so wild as "Freewillum" and has not its distinctly primitive character. The last time I saw Rogers he told me that I was right in imagining it was a dance song. "When de ole man Dublin and his daughter Bessie get togedder she[52] shouted; when she say 'quank' de ole woman jump way over, and den de ole man jump, and den turn back again. Do de same t'ing ober, ebery time":

(539)

Rockah mh moomba
Cum bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
I rockah mh moomba
(Cum) bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!

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[52] One gender did duty for all in the old days, and the first "she" undoubtedly stood for "they," and the second "she" for "he."

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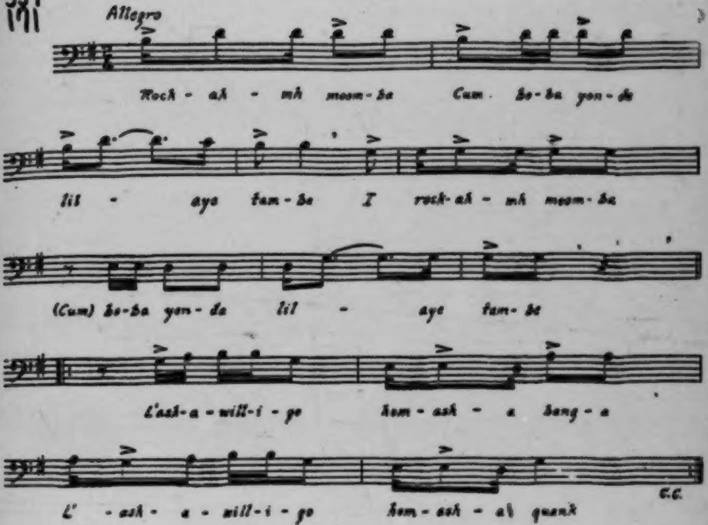
Allegro
Rock - ah - mh moom - ba Cum . bo - ba yon - da
lil - aye tam - be I rock-ah - mh moom - ba
(Cum) bo-ba yon - da lil - aye tam - be
L'ash-a - will-i - go hom - ash - a bang - a
L' - ash - a - will-i - go hom - ash - ah quank
G.C.

[p.47]

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This song and the one following evidently had a common origin. Perhaps "Ole Dublin" and "Gullah Ben" came from the same part of Africa, or were friends in Liberty County. Both songs are suggestive of the rhythm of the "ring-play":

Wa'k[33] Bil-le Au-ba
Be bul-o
Pretty fine lady
Be bul-o

I WOK OM A MO-NA

The following song was sung by Gullah Ben, who—like Dublin—came from Africa. He taught it to Ben Delegal, who in turn taught it to Amelia Dawley:

Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wok om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa willigo schowyh bunga
Lilli hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
Hassa willigo schowyh bunga
Lilli hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa willigo schowyh quenda here
Hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
Hassa willigo schowyh quenda here
Hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.

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[33] Pronounce "Wa'k" to rhyme with "rock."

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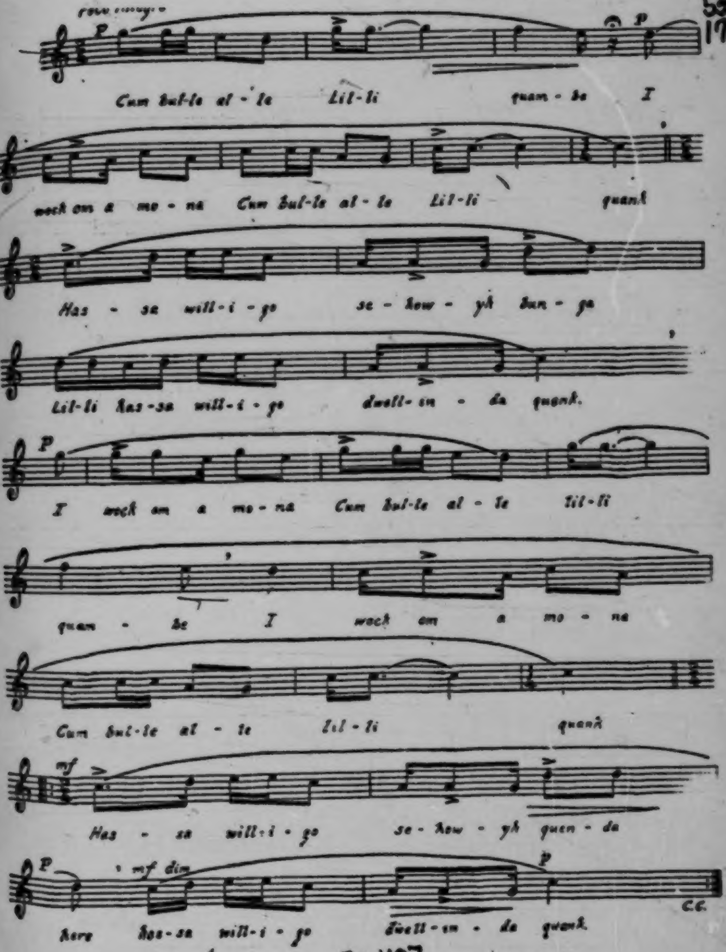
p
Cum bul-le al-le Lil-li quan-be I
wock om a mo-na Cum bul-le al-le Lil-li quank
Has-sa will-i-go se-how-yh bun-ga
Lil-li has-sa will-i-go dwell-in-da quank.
p
I wock om a mo-na Cum bul-le al-le lil-li
quan-be I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le lil-li quank
mf
Has-sa will-i-go se-how-yh quen-da
p
mf dim
here has-sa will-i-go dwell-in-da quank.
C.C.

[p.49]

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BYUM BY-E

• 533
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The development of the religious song of the Negro under the influence of the white man's instruction is interestingly shown in this song. A better example could not be found.[54] Nancy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, learned it from her grandmother who, Nancy tells me, "came from Africa and was old in 1862."

It speaks well for Nancy's intelligence that she sings the song as it was taught her, softening certain syllables—just as "Shisha Ma-ley" did—without attempting to correct the English.

(763) The song appears to have originated at the death-bed of "Shisha Shalun," who sang the first melodious verse with calm resignation:

(539)

Fa-le-well Shisha Maley
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
An shollen gane en mone
Shisha har lepentin shu beleven
Heaven gates are oven
I love Shisha Maley yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum
I love my shisha yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum.
(Repeat, substituting Shalun for Maley)

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[54] *The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.*

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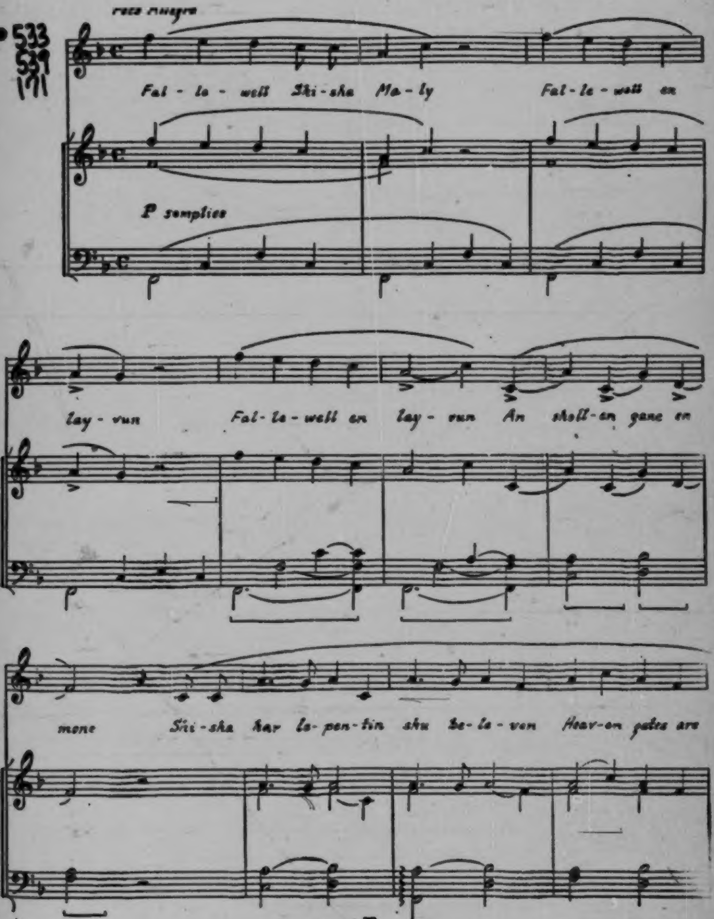
Poco Allegro
Fal - le - well Shi-sha Ma - ly Fal - le - well en
P semplice
lay - run Fal - le - well en lay - run An shall-en gane en
mone Shi-sha har le-pen-tin shu be-le-ven Heav-en gates are

[p.61]

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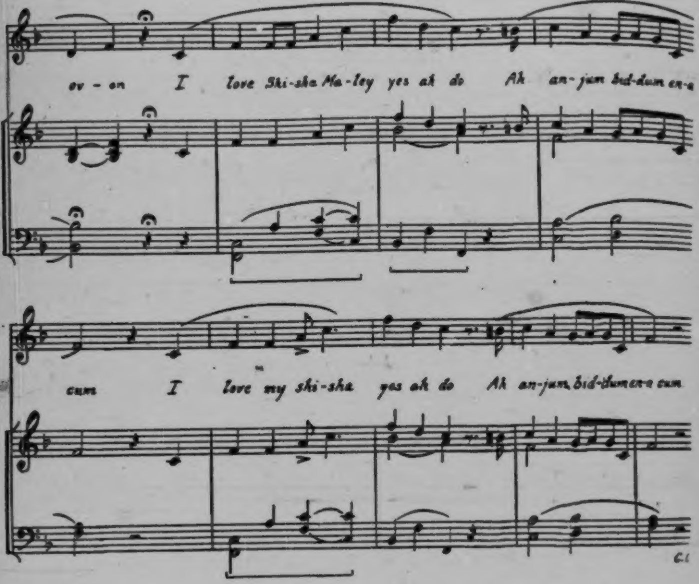
ov - on I love Shi-sha Ma-ley yes ah do Ah an-jum bid-dum en-a
cum I love my shi-sha yes ah do Ah an-jum bid-dum en-a cum
C.L.

[263]

When Shisha Ma-ley made her response, grief apparently got the upper hand. She lapsed into her native tongue as well as the song-form of Africa,[58] and gave vent to her sorrow in these poignant lines:

Shisha Shalun gone en lay-vun
An sholl en gane en moan
Lor' Shisha!
Missa sholl en ganey moan
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by e-e
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by-e
(Repeat)

[179]

[58] In spite of the fact that one verse shows the influence of the white man's hymns while the other reverts to the African form, there is a homogeneous quality that demonstrates the ability of the Negro to make the creation his own.

[p. 52]

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5. BYUM BY-E

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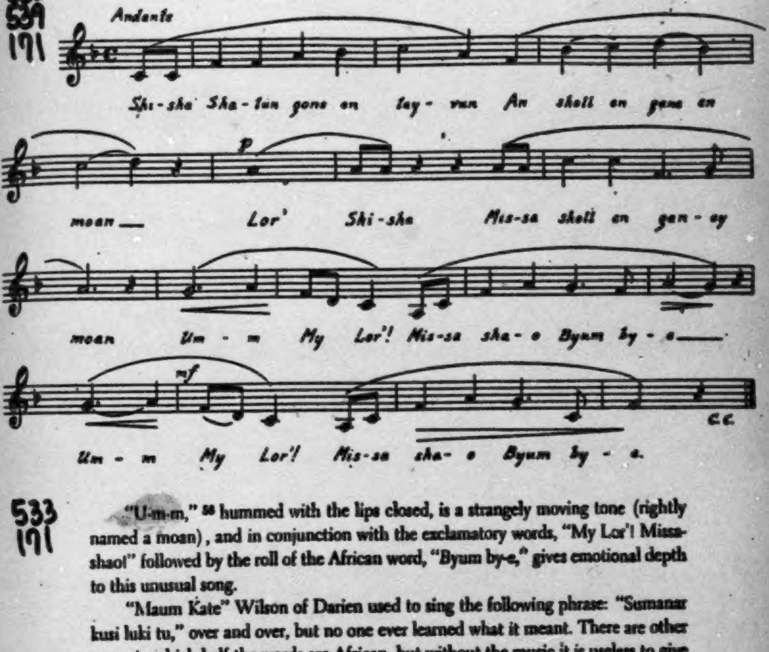
Andante
Shi - sha Sha - lun gone en lay - run An shall en gone en
moan
p
Lor' Shi - sha Mis-sa shall en gon - ay
moan Um - m My Lor'! Mis-sa sha - o Byum by - e
mf
Um - m My Lor'! Mis-sa sha - o Byum by - e.
C.C.

533
171

"U-m-m,"[58] hummed with the lips closed, is a strangely moving tone (rightly named a moan), and in conjunction with the exclamatory words, "My Lor'! Missa-shao!" followed by the roll of the African word, "Byum by-e," gives emotional depth to this unusual song.

"Maum Kate" Wilson of Darien used to sing the following phrase: "Sumanar kusi luki tu," over and over, but no one ever learned what it meant. There are other songs in which half the words are African, but without the music it is useless to give them.

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[58] *An Anglo-African official tells me that the African side-drum (often called "the hypocrite" from the many different tones it is capable of producing through change of pressure of the arm under which it is held) makes a sound very similar to the hummed "U-m-m-m" so frequently employed in the slave songs. This humming is evidently another African survival. Its use is mentioned by the Denis-Roosevelts as common to the Belgian Congo. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in* Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent, *says it is popular among the Zulus: "sometimes . . . a whole chorus will hum together with closed lips."*

[p. 53]

536 27),[A] makes with head and shoulders bowed slightly forward, arms held close to her
body, elbows bent at right angles, forearms thrust out before her, and palms up-
turned in a supplicating gesture. White musicians and dancers have obtained much
from these untutored people, who appear to have an inborn gift for rhythm in its
many manifestations. Work or play, preaching, praying, music, sculpture, or danc-
ing—all are one to them when it comes to rhythmic expression.

HA'K 'E ANGELS

567 Deacon Eddy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, who contributed this Watch
796 Night shout, explained that the slaves, when allowed to go to a praise-house that was
out of bounds, were given passes with their promise to return before sun-up. On
New Year's Eve the service consisted of prayers, religious songs, and a sermon by
(782) the preacher. At midnight, different members offered thanks to the Good Lord for
the blessings of the past twelve months and implored His aid for the year to come.
The shouting then began, and continued until dawn. This shout, which varies little
• 533 in content or rhythm in Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh, and Camden counties,[3] was the
last to be sung as the watcher, appointed for that duty, announced: "Day's
a-comin'":

(539)
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels

---

[3] In the vicinity of Albany, Georgia, there is a similar version that uses "Yonder Come Day" instead of "Ha'k 'e Angels."

A, [For Illustration 27, see Category 142, plate facing p. 161--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

Ha'k 'E Angels

● 533
539

Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Oh look at day (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
See day's a-comin (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Call my mother (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Throw off de covah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Start that a-risin' (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Who that a-comin' (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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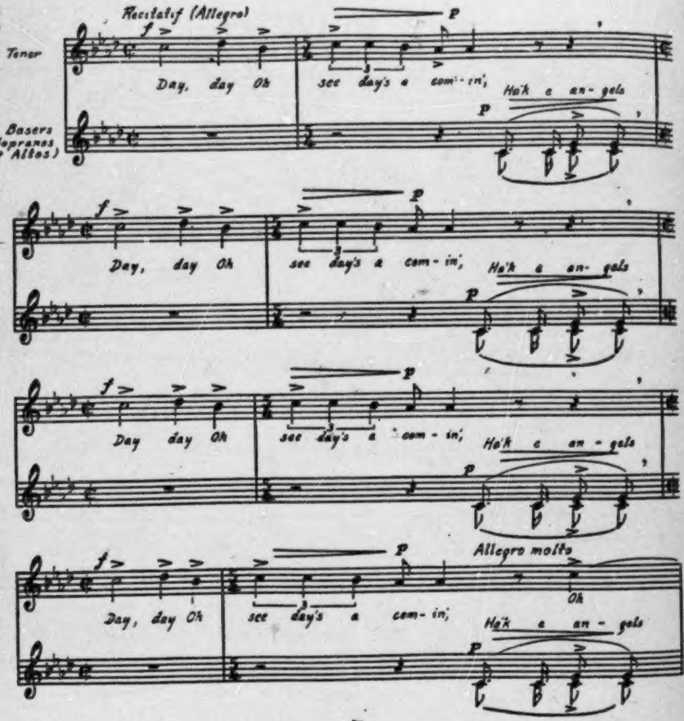
6. HA'K 'E ANGELS

● 533
539


Recitatif (Allegro)
Tenor
Basses (Sopranos + Altos)
Day, day Oh
see day's a com-in',
Ha'k e an-gels
Day day Oh
Allegro molto
Oh

[p. 58]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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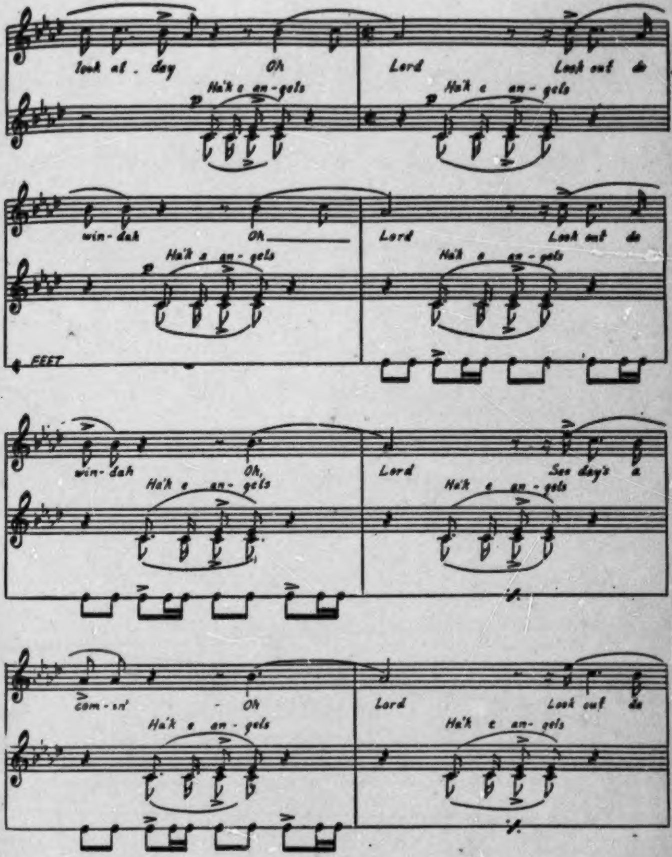
look at . day
Oh
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
Look out de
Ha'k e an-gels
win-dah
Oh
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
Look out de
Ha'k e an-gels
FEET
win-dah
Oh,
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
See day's a
Ha'k e an-gels
com-in' - Oh
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
Look out de
Ha'k e an-gels

523

537

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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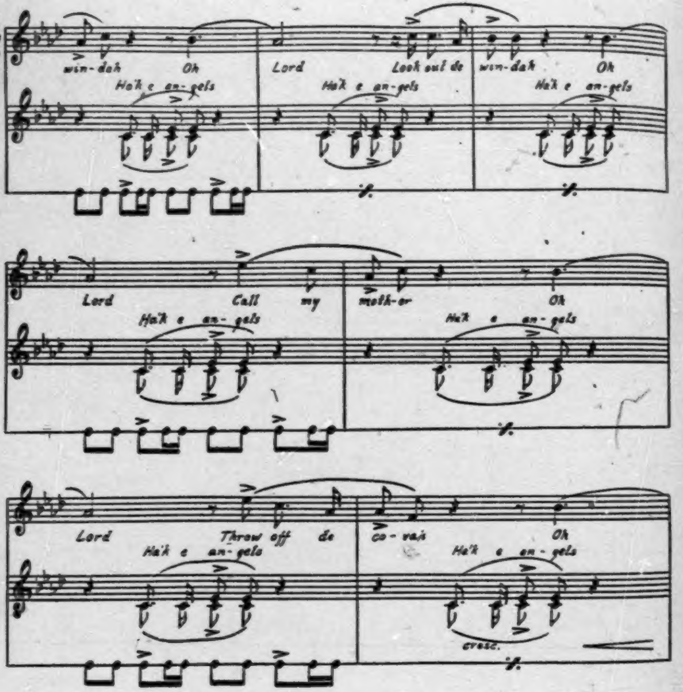
● 533
539


win-dah
Oh
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
Look out de
Ha'k e an-gels
win-dah
Oh
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
Call my
Ha'k e an-gels
moth-er
Oh
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
Throw off de
Ha'k e an-gels
co-vah
Oh
Ha'k e an-gels
cresc.

[p. 60]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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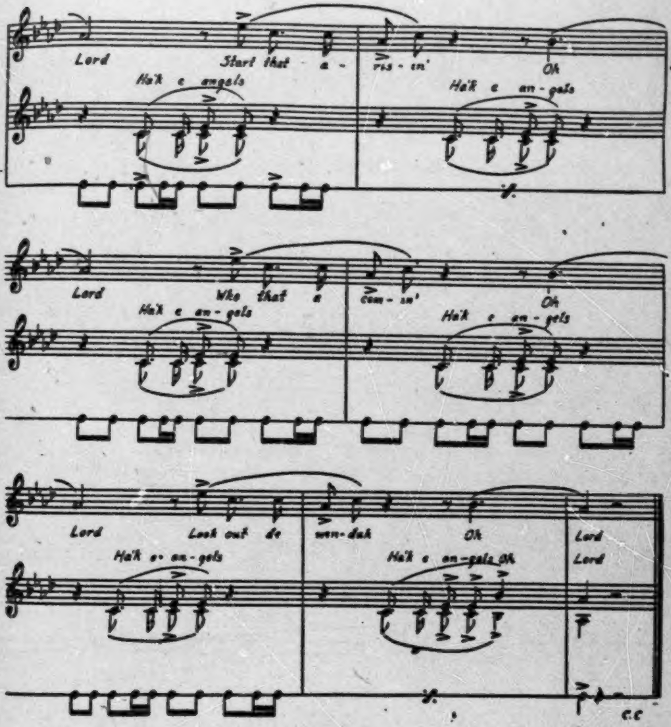
Lord
Start that a-
vis-in'
Oh
Ha'k e angels
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
Who that a
com-in'
Oh
Ha'k e an-gels
Ha'k e an-gels
Lord
Look out de
win-dah
Oh
Lord
Lord
Ha'k e- an-gels
Ha'k e an-gels Oh
C.C

533
539

[p. 61]

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Georgia
St. Simon's Island

UNTIL I DIE

796

I am told that this shout was once a favorite at "foreday meetin'," held on Sunday in the neighborhood of five o'clock.

Laura considered it her duty to ring the bell, and get the other members out to church. Since her death, however, nobody has felt the urge to take her place, and on St. Simon's the early service has lapsed:

[533]
[539]

I'm goin' tuh set in the humble chair
Goin' tuh rock from side tuh side
Goin' tuh rock from side tuh side
Un-til I die.

Chorus: Un-til I die (leader)
Un-til I die (basers)
Un-til I die (leader)
Un-til I die (basers)
I'm goin' tuh rock from side tuh side 'til I die.
(Repeated several times)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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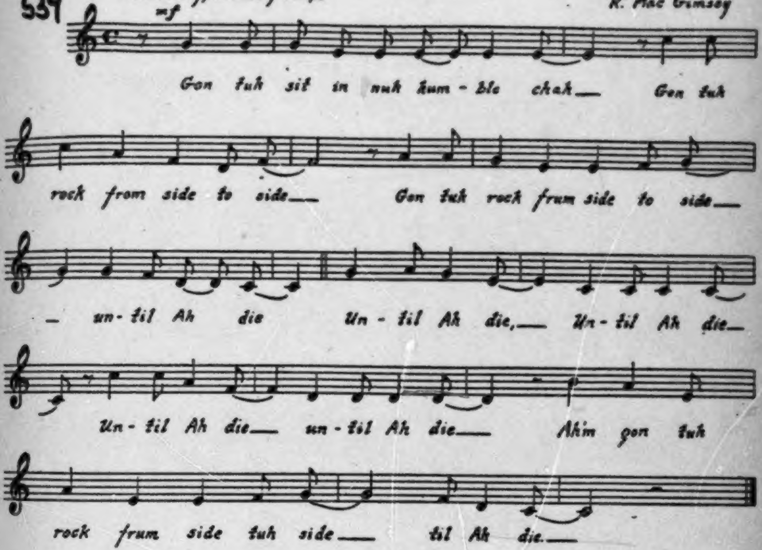
7. UNTIL I DIE

● 533
539

Moderately, in steady tempo

R. Mac Gimsey


mf
Gon tuh sit in nuh hum - ble chah___ Gon tuh
rock from side to side___ Gon tuh rock frum side to side___
— un- til Ah die Un - til Ah die,___ Un- til Ah die___
Un- til Ah die___ un - til Ah die___ Ahim gon tuh
rock frum side tuh side___ til Ah die.___

[p.63]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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PLUMB DE LINE

533
539

There are as many variations in the words of this shout song as there are counties on the coast of Georgia. However, the warning to "Plumb de line" and the tune itself remain the same, while the naming of deacons and plumbers, sisters and members, and the things they must do is made to fit the rhythm as a glove fits the hand:

Members,
Plumb de line.[5]
Members,
Plumb de line.
O members,
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.[6]
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.

---

[5] *Julia Walker sings "Plumb de line" an octave higher than the others—as was customary with "high tribbles" in the old days.*

[6] *This line is often sung "You want t'go t'Heaven you got a plumb de line."*

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533 "Dear brother, Plumb de line," continues the song; and the next verse follows
539 the same construction and thought in: "You got t' live right," following which Old
Quarterman always put in an effective "Yes Sir!" The above version, used by Katherine, appears to be more modern than that used by Josephine, who gets a far-off look when she sings:

Deacon deacon,[7]
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
If you pray fo' me
Plumb de line.
I pray fo' you
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.

---

(177) [7] The deacon "deacons" a song when he reads it two lines at a time for the benefit of any in the congregation who have not a hymn book or who cannot read. The custom of "lining out" and then singing a hymn was copied from the whites, who sang in this manner a century ago—perhaps later in sections where illiteracy prevailed. When done to short metre it is dreary beyond measure, but long metre sometimes has a barbaric charm.

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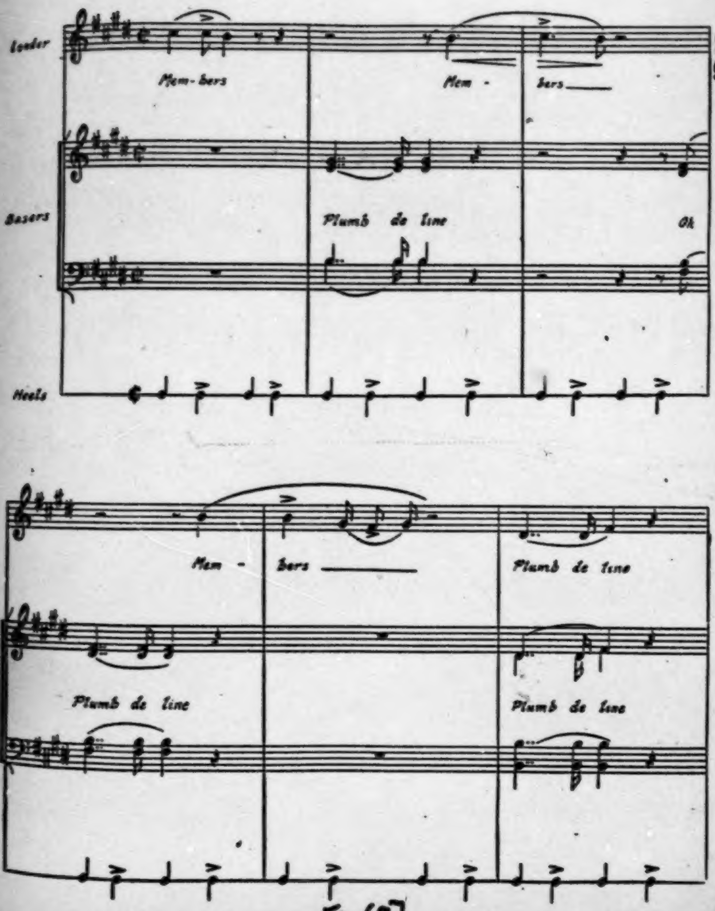
9. PLUMB DE LINE


Leader
Mem-bers
Mem - bers
Basers
Plumb de line
Oh
Heels
Mem - bers
Plumb de line
Plumb de line
Plumb de line

533●
539

[p. 69]

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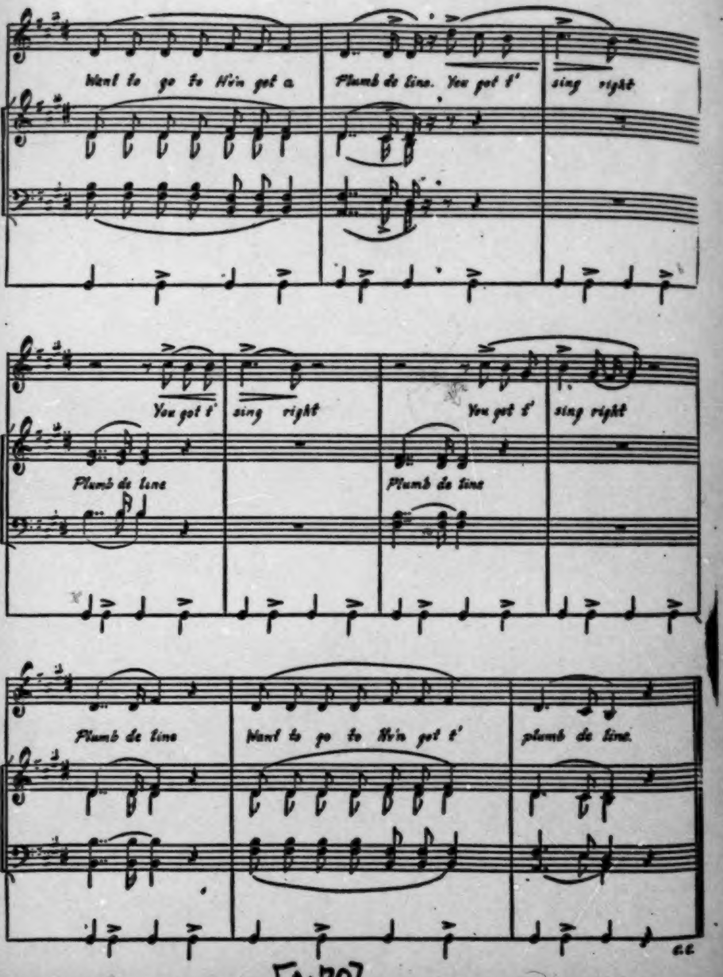
St. Simon's Island

533
539


Want to go to Hev'n got a
Plumb de line. You got t'
sing right
You got t'
sing right
Plumb de line
You got t'
sing right
Plumb de line
Plumb de line
Want to go to Hev'n got t'
plumb de line.
e.e.

[p.70]

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10. DOWN TO DE MIRE

533
535
Of all the ring-shouts I know, "Down to de Mire" is in more ways than one the most interesting. In the center of the ring, one member gets down on his knees and, with head touching the floor, rotates with the group as it moves around the circle. The different shouters, as they pass, push the head "down to the mire." The several arms reaching out to give a push make an unusually picturesque pattern. The refrain—repeated relentlessly—corresponds in its character and rhythmic beat to that of the drums in a song which accompanied an ominous ceremonial dance seen in *Trader Horn.*[8] One is apparently never too old or too fat to take part in this shout. I saw Quarterman, born in 1844, go "down to the mire" with satisfaction when he was ninety. Josephine, who weighs well over two hundred pounds, thinks nothing of getting down on her hands and knees and, with her head bobbing to the floor, proves the power of mind over matter:

533
539
Sister Emma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
Sister Emma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Sister Josie, you must come down to de mire
Sister Josie, you must come down to de mire

---

[8] *I am told that, while the greater part of this film was made in California, "background shots" made in Africa were introduced, for obvious reasons. It is to these shots, naturally, that the above reference applies.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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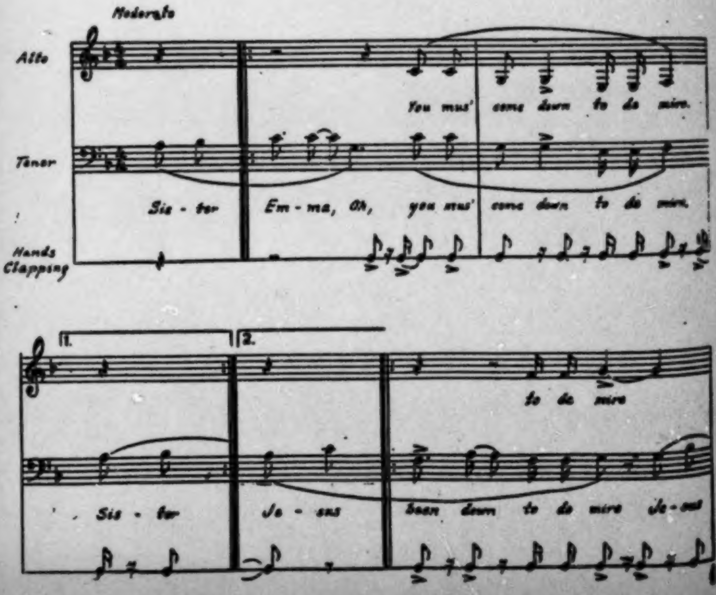
533
589

Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire.


Moderato
Alto
Tenor
Hands Clapping
You mus' come down to de mire.
Sis - ter Em - ma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
1.
2.
to de mire
Sis - ter Je - sus Been down to de mire Je - sus

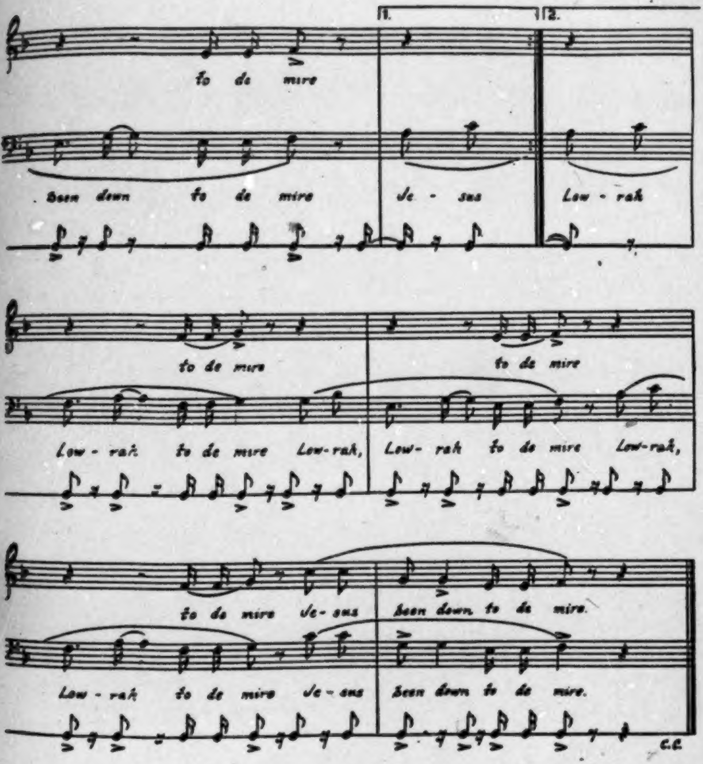
9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

✓ NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island

533●
539


1.
2.
to de mire
Been down to de mire
Je - sus
Low - rah
to de mire
Low - rah to de mire Low-rah,
to de mire
Low- rah to de mire Low-rah,
to de mire Je - sus
Been down to de mire.
Low - rah to de mire Je - sus
Been down to de mire.
C.C.

[p.73]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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•533
539

ELI AH CAN'T STAN'

Hate that[9] sin that made me moan
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Chorus: Hay John—John's on nuh[10] islun
Hay John—E-li Ah can't stan'![11]

* * *

John's on the isle uh Pat-te-mos
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Take one brick out Satan's wall
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
Satan's wall come tumblin' down
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
One a these days I'm goin' away
Eli—can't stan'!
Won't be back 'till judgment day
Eli—can't stan'!

(194)

---

[9] *"That" sounds like "tat," and "Ah" sounds very like a short "eh."*
[10] *"The"—following a final "n"—has the sound of "nuh."*
[11] *The chorus is repeated after every two or three verses.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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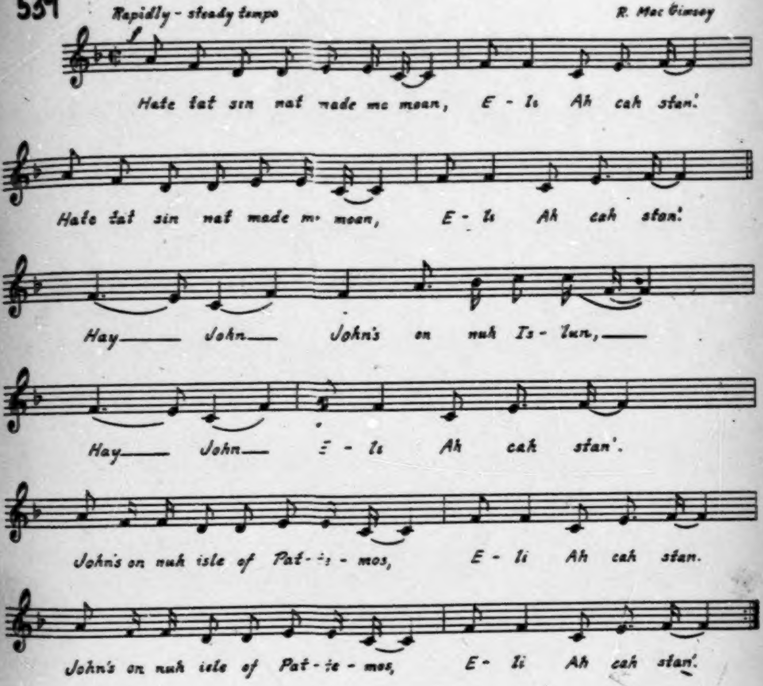
533
539

11. ELI AH CAN'T STAN'


Rapidly - steady tempo
R. Mac Gimsey
Hate dat sin dat made me moan, E - li Ah cah stan'.
Hate dat sin dat made me moan, E - li Ah cah stan'.
Hay John John's on nuh Is - lun,
Hay John E - li Ah cah stan'.
John's on nuh isle of Pat - i - mos, E - li Ah cah stan.
John's on nuh isle of Pat - te - mos, E - li Ah cah stan'.

[p.75]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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KNEE-BONE

533
[461]
[501]

Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes some shout songs—also used for rowing, through a suitable change of rhythm—in the following words:

> I told you formerly that I thought I could trace distinctly some popular national melody with which I was familiar in almost all their songs; but I have been quite at a loss to discover any such foundation for many that I have heard lately and which have appeared to me extraordinarily wild and unaccountable. The way in which the chorus strikes in with the burden, between each phrase of the melody, chanted by a single voice, is very curious and effective, especially with the rhythm of the rowlocks for accompaniment.

But if Fanny Kemble had visited Africa and heard a few of the native songs (such as can now be purchased in gramophone shops specializing in foreign records), she would not have been puzzled by those sung by her husband's slaves.

[199]
[996]

What was said in 1839 concerning these "unaccountable" songs applies equally well to the songs given in this Chapter. And they are sung today, much as they were then, by descendants of the singers Fanny Kemble mentions. Side by side with these semi-chants you hear songs which show clearly the white man's musical influence. The oldest Negroes say that they shouted after church Sunday afternoons and after prayer meeting at night. Before the shouting began, they sang spirituals and "lined out" hymns. The chances are that all three types were sung from the time the white man concerned himself with the religious instruction of his slaves. In Liberty County the members of the Midway community countenanced a revival in 1838, which lasted two years and was continued by the whites until 1842.

In the shout song, Knee-Bone, curious twists and exotic tones are employed—including the musical, yet nasal "ha-nnn"—that must be heard to be appreciated. None of our musical symbols is capable of suggesting the strange turns used in this, as well as others of the more primitive Afro-American chants. If records are not made soon, the elusive beauty which characterizes this type of singing will be irretrievably lost.

The shouter, in this musical chant, obeys instructions and bends the knee far down with the rhythm of the words "Bend my knee-bone to the ground." The rowing version calls for "knee-bone bend to the elbow bend." "Aye Lord" is often substituted for "Ha-nnn Lord."

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Knee-bone

•533
539

Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone didn't I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone didn't I call you
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the mornin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the mornin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the evenin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the evenin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.

533
50
461

Creighton Churchill explains to me that when this song was used for rowing it could have had only one rhythmic accompaniment, the oars, since the other two rhythms, the hands and heels, would have thrown the rowers off their beat. To use his words: "The speed of the rowing version must also have been slower, for one could not possibly row to the rhythm of this version. It should be recognized as well that no musical meter known to man can represent exactly the rhythm of oars in their locks; in this song especially, it is something intangible and personal, like the beat of the Viennese waltz. For the sake of simplicity I have represented the rowing rhythm in this transcription as 2/8, 3/8, 3/8, equal to a full measure of time for the voices and other rhythms."

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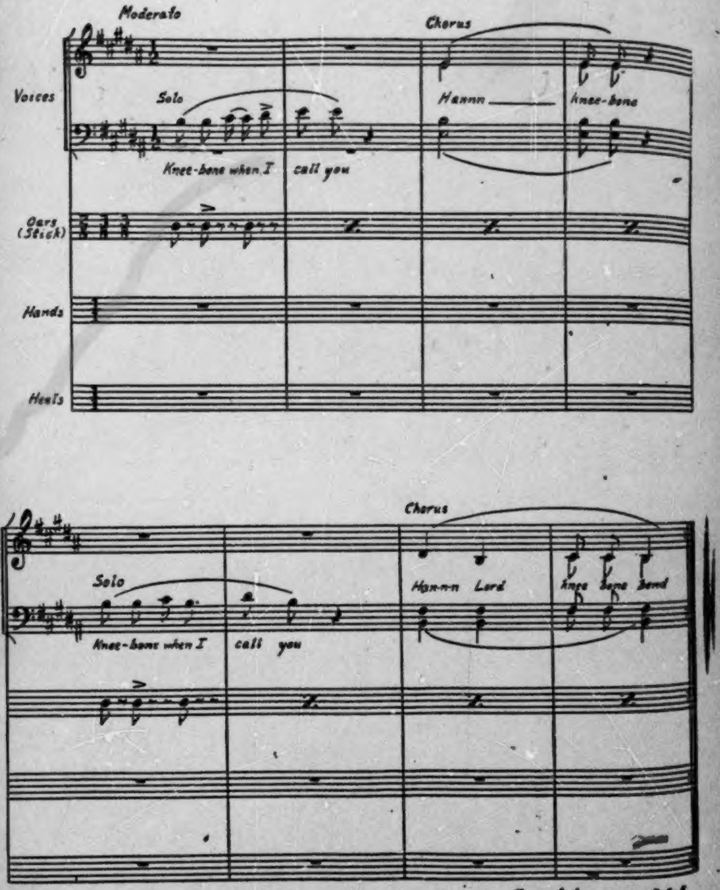
13. KNEE-BONE

533
539


Moderato
Chorus
Voices
Solo
Knee-bone when I
call you
Hannn
knee-bone
Oars (Stick)
Hands
Heels
Chorus
Solo
Knee-bone when I
call you
Hann-n Lord
Knee bone bend

Repeat for verses 2 to 5

[p. 82]

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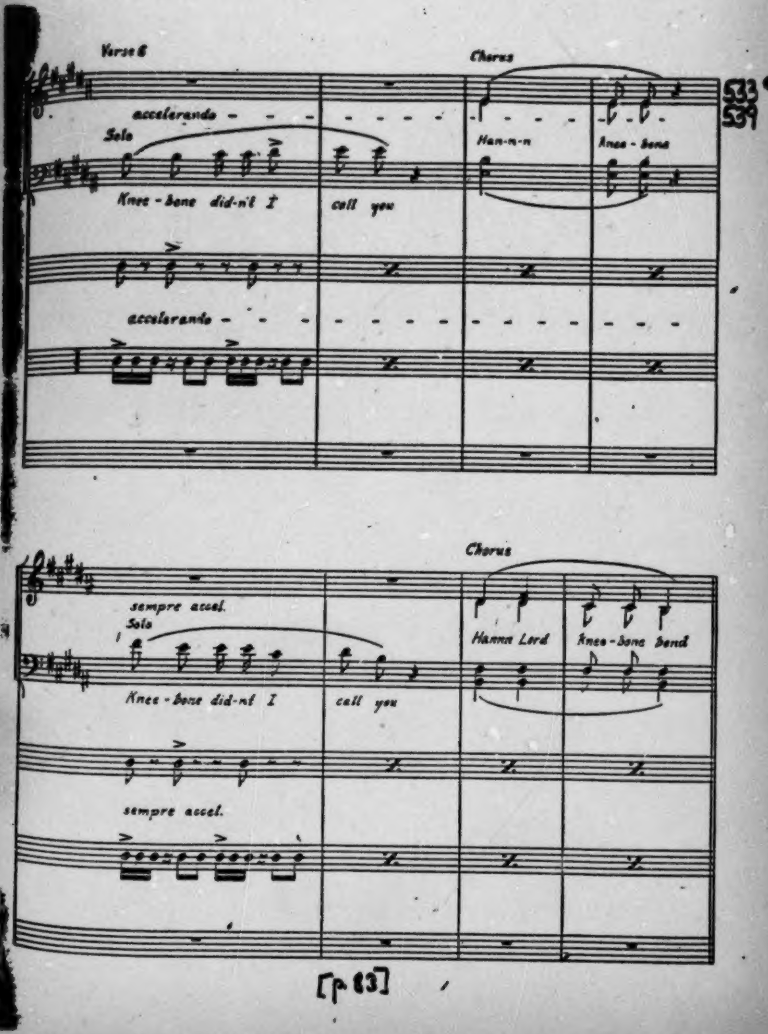
Verse 6
Chorus
accelerando
Solo
Knee - bone did-n't I call you
Han-n-n
Knee - bone
accelerando
533
539
Chorus
sempre accel.
Solo
Knee - bone did-n't I call you
Hanna Lord
Knee - bone bend
sempre accel.

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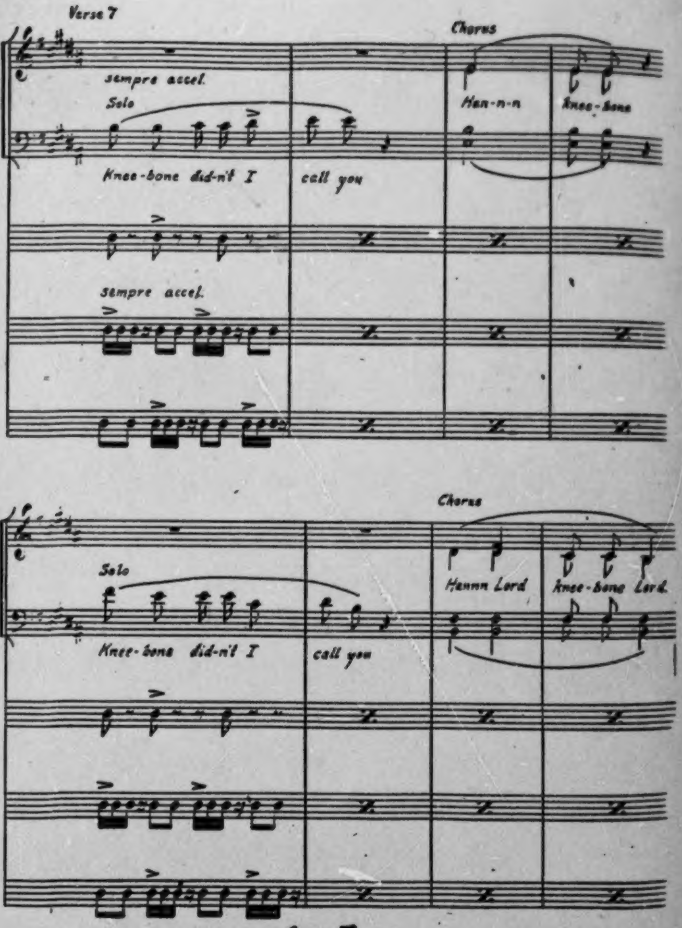
● 533
539


Verse 7
sempre accel.
Solo
Chorus
Han-n-n
Knee-bone
Knee-bone did-n't I
call you
sempre accel.
Chorus
Solo
Hennn Lord
Knee-bone Lord
Knee-bone did-n't I
call you

[A.84]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

OH EVE—WHERE IS ADAM?

•533 (126) In taking down a shout song, you are beset with the difficulty of reconciling the different versions. No leader sings a song twice alike, and no two ever sing exactly the same version; yet the beat, the accent, and the tune remain so stable that leaders are unerringly followed. The words are in truth only the vehicle for carrying along the complicated rhythm. This is beaten out by the heels of the McIntosh County group in a way not approached by any other that I know. Shouters sometimes clap their hands; on St. Simon's they always call for a broom handle, which, when knocked on the floor, provides an extemporaneous tom-tom. In McIntosh County, however, they are so proficient in tapping out the rhythm with their heels that they can dispense with both sticks and hand clapping. With their hands free, they are able to do things descriptive of the text which less skillful groups would not be at liberty to attempt.

535 (539) The shout:

Oh Eve—where is Ad-u-m?
Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
Pickin' up leaves.

is a good example of the combination of dancing and pantomime. After swinging deliberately around the circle, singing the slower part of the chant, the dancers, when the time quickens, go through the motion of picking up leaves. With aprons gathered up and bodies bent, the women add greatly to the interest of the dance. All are amusingly industrious, but the men, without the assistance of aprons, are not quite so convincing in following the action indicated by the text.

533 535 Since the version I have encountered in Glynn and Camden Counties holds to "pinnin' leaves," I am inclined to believe that some McIntosh shouter took an artist's license and substituted "pickin' up" for "pinnin'" for the sake of more varied, more picturesque action. At any rate, the delightful result justifies the less usual interpretation of the Biblical text.

With "Lord called Adam—pinnin' leaves," the movement is faster. The feet are not supposed to leave the floor or to cross each other, such an act being sinful. The shouting proceeds with a curious shuffling but controlled step which taps out with the heel a resonant syncopation fascinating in its intricacy and precision. Over

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 and over the chant is repeated, the rhythm all-important, always right; the sonorous
535 Old Testament words are just necessary sounds to carry along the melody, and the sequence of thought is nothing to worry about.

533 The words may be monotonous when read, but are not so when sung: "Adam"
539 is turned into "Ad-u-m," with unusual tones and inflections all through the leading
[177] lines, which show surprising invention. It is self-evident that the song belongs to the
[178] African question-and-answer type, and bears no trace of European influence in its form:

Oh Eve where is Ad-u-m?
Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Faster: Lord called Adam
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam wouldn' answer
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Ad-u-m? (Rising inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.
Ad-u-m? (Falling inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.
Where't thou?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam naked
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Ain't y'u shame'?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Lord I'm shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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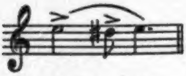
14. BLOW GABRIEL

●533



533 786 152 159 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of religious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!" and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 159 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 786 787 159 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said, "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

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MY SOUL ROCK ON JUBILEE

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This song was sung and shouted after prayer meeting and after church service—usually when the church "got a soul":

Chorus: 'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord![13]
'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
I got a right in Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
I got a right in Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

Repeat Chorus:

In reference to the following version, Clara said: "When it gets hot, them that's on the outside of the church comes runnin' in." I asked what she meant by "getting hot." "O, you feel good. You know things is warmin' up and you gets revived":

I come t' tell you 'bout Jubilee
O-o-o-h my Lord!
Come t' shout that Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee[14]
O-o-o-h my Lord!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

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[13] A wild quavering cry given by the "high tribble"—far above the other singers—makes your "hair riz," as the Negroes say.

[14] Faster, with double rap on "That Jud! That Jud!"

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GOOD-BYE EVERYBODY

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Certain songs are considered to be peculiarly suitable for specific occasions. This shout has always been the favorite farewell song among the St. Simon's Negroes. At the Cabin, the white folks seem to think the evening cannot end properly without it:

Good-bye everybody
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Good-bye everybody
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Goin' 'way to leave you, sorry t' tell you
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Jesus settin' on the Sac'ment Table
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Handin' the bread an' the wine to the members
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Good-bye all you deacons
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Good-bye all you deacons
Good-bye sing Hallelujah

Good-bye is also said to "all you preachers," "all you false-pretenders," "all you hypocrites," and "all you tattlers."

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15. GOOD-BYE EVERYBODY

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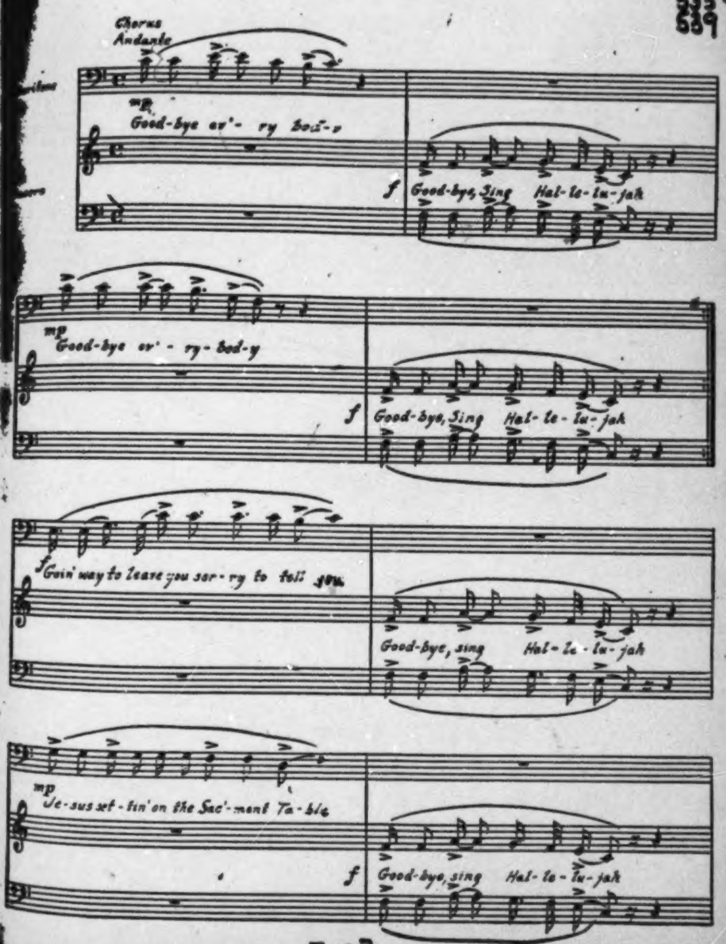
Chorus
Andante
mp
Good-bye ev'-ry bod-y
f
Good-bye, Sing Hal-le-lu-jah
mp
Good-bye ev'-ry-bod-y
f
Good-bye, Sing Hal-le-lu-jah
f
Goin' way to leave you sor-ry to tell you
Good-bye, sing Hal-le-lu-jah
mp
Je-sus set-tin' on the Sac'-ment Ta-ble
f
Good-bye, sing Hal-le-lu-jah

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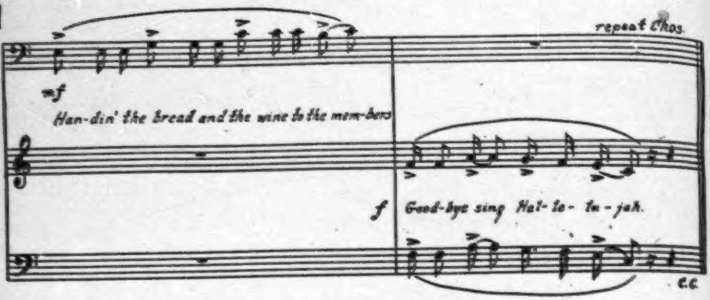
repeat Chos.
mf
Han-din' the bread and the wine to the mem-bers
f
Good-bye sing Hal-le- lu -jah.
C.C.

The following verse comes from McIntosh County:

Goin' up in the heaven
Goin' to try on mh garment
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Goin' to try on mh garment
See how it fit me
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.

(Illustration 15)

[p. 92]

CHAPTER FOUR

Ring-Play, Dance, and Fiddle Songs

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Of the ring-play, dance, and fiddle songs, only those accompanying ring-play were countenanced by the church. However, certain solo dances like the Buzzard Lope evaded difficulties by using such religious songs as "Gimme Him" and "Throw Me Anywhere." These solo dances appear to have been "done for fun," and in our section bore no particular classification.[1] But the rags, reels, and fiddle or "sinful" songs were an entirely different matter. They were looked upon by church members with considerable horror as quite beyond the pale. Those of mature years would have nothing to do with them, and even today they are regarded with suspicion. In consequence, innocent as they appear to be, they have been the most difficult to uncover. Perhaps if I were a man or a godless colored woman I might find something as racy as was ever composed or sung in a "jook."

533 The ring-play songs were totally unknown to me for almost twenty years after I went to St. Simon's. Entirely by chance I learned about them in the Boston Public Library, when I happened on a short account of "Ring-Games from Georgia" by Loraine Darby,[2] and recognized one of the examples as a shanty used by our Negro stevedores in loading lumber. When I returned to Georgia, I asked Julia what that song had to do with ring-games. Again it was brought home to me that we learn from these people, who have no past, only what we first discover for ourselves. She said: "Dear me! It's a ring-play song, but it's so long since I sung one I'd forgotten we ever did." Later I found that I could not have escaped hearing inferior modern versions had I lived near a Negro school, for the children sing them at the top of their lungs.

With such a clue, I have unearthed various stray bits concerning these interesting game songs. Little has been written about them, and that little naturally classes

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[1] Thomas W. Talley, *in* Negro Folk Rhymes, describes them as "star-danced" by one or two individuals at a time.

[2] Journal of American Folk-Lore, 1917.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 them with the ring-games of the white people. Undoubtedly there is sound foundation
(177) for assuming that they owe something to English originals, for many show it,
either in the action, or in certain leading lines. On the other hand, they are more melodious than the game songs of the whites; they employ an amusing variety of dance steps, possess a contagious rhythm, and make use of vigorous hand clapping, which is utterly unlike anything European. These same characteristics are emphasized by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*, and by N. G. J. Ballanta, in his article on "Music of the African Races." Their descriptions of African dance songs might well apply to those of the Georgia Negroes prior to 1900. The similarity indicates that here again we may have such an equal proportion of English and African influence as is found in the other groups of Negro songs.

Not being a scientist, I am privileged to make guesses, and one of them is tied
175 up with the history of our pioneers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, a
567 host of planters, with their families and slaves, moved to the richer lands farther
west. The number that went over the Federal Road into Alabama was so great that a lone eastbound traveler reported from Georgia that he was never out of sight of a long line of migrants. A good indication of the extent of the westward movement is given in the fact that the population of Texas increased from four thousand in 1820 to almost twenty thousand in 1830. Most of the settlers were Southerners, who took their slaves with them. In those frontier days the smaller property owners worked
175 with their slaves, and attended the same revivals. Because of this the songs and customs
567 of one were bound to influence those of the other. The more religious pioneers
were opposed to dancing, and used these innocent party games, with their accompanying
533 songs, as a substitute at their social gatherings long after they had been discarded
(177) by the fashionable planters of the southeastern seaboard, and relegated to
the Negroes and children. Original sin of course sees to the preservation of the fiddle
175 songs; we are told that, in the days before railroads provided an easy means of communication
533 with the outside world, social life in the newly-settled territories was
"sluggish in some ways and wild in others." In consequence the connection between the worldly songs found on the coast of Georgia and the hill-billy and cowboy songs of the slave states west of the Mississippi River seems to me self-evident.

EMMA YOU MY DARLIN'

533
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This ring-play has been revived by Julia Armstrong, who remembers it from her youth.

Emma you my darlin'
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!
Emma you duh bad gal
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!
Emma you from the country
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!

(Illustration 30)[A]

A, [For Illustration 30, see Category 533, plate facing p. 192--Analyst]

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16. EMMA YOU MY DARLIN'

● 533
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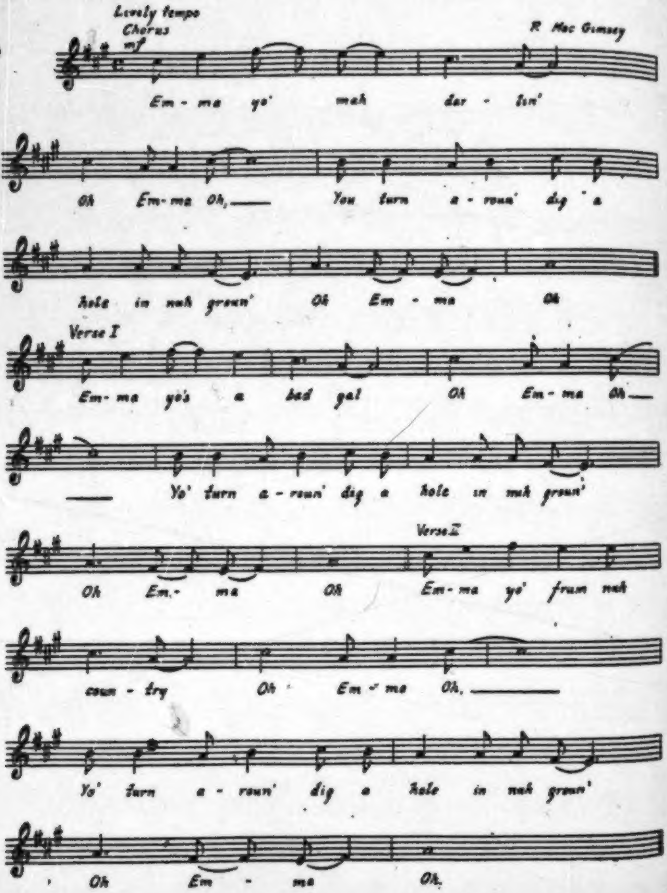
Lively tempo
Chorus
mf
R. Mac Gimsey
Em-ma yo' mah dar-lin'
Oh Em-ma Oh,
You turn a-roun' dig a
hole in nah groun' Oh Em-ma Oh
Verse I
Em-ma yo's a bad gal Oh Em-ma Oh
Yo' turn a-roun' dig a hole in nah groun'
Oh Em-ma Oh
Verse II
Em-ma yo' frum nah
coun-try Oh Em-ma Oh,
Yo' turn a-roun' dig a hole in nah groun'
Oh Em-ma Oh.

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14. *Farewell Song in the Cabin*

[facing p. 96]

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SANGAREE

•533
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(524)

This ring-play varies in action wherever I see it done. For that reason I will attempt no description. The tune, however, always remains the same:

If I live
Sangaree.
Don' get kill'
Sangaree.
I'm goin' back
Sangaree.
Jacksonville
Sangaree.

Chorus: Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.

If I live
Sangaree.
See nex' fall
Sangaree.
Ain' goin' t' plant
Sangaree.
No cotton at all
Sangaree.
Repeat Chorus:

Chicken in the fiel'
Sangaree.
Scratchin' up peas
Sangaree.
Dog on the outside
Sangaree.
Scratchin' off fleas
Sangaree.
Repeat Chorus:

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Extra verses are contributed by a Darien singer:

My husban's got the shovel
Sangaree.
An' I got the hoe
Sangaree.
If that ain't farmin'
Sangaree.
I don't know
Sangaree.

Repeat Chorus:

If you want t' see a nigger
Sangaree.
Cut the fool
Sangaree.
Let him ride
Sangaree.
A white man's mule
Sangaree.

Chorus: Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.

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18. SANGAREE

Lively tempo

R. Mac Gimsey

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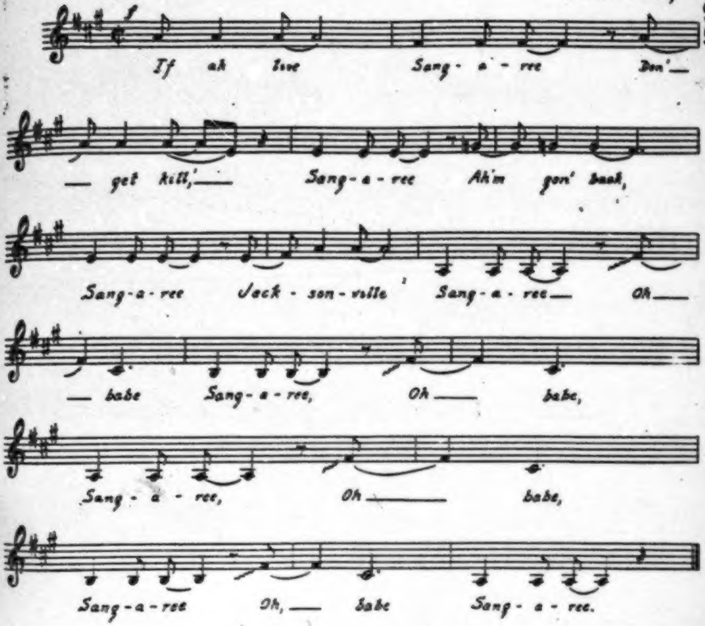
f
If ah live Sang - a - ree Don' — — get kill, — Sang - a - ree Ah'm gon' back,
Sang - a - ree Jack - son - ville Sang - a - ree — Oh —
— babe Sang - a - ree, Oh — babe,
Sang - a - ree, Oh — babe,
Sang - a - ree Oh, — babe Sang - a - ree.

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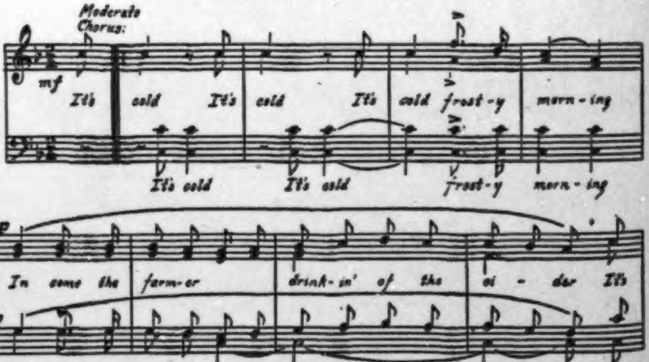
19. IT'S COLD FROSTY MORNIN'

The words of this "play," called "a marchin' piece," are clearly derived from an old English song. With "It's cold!" two and two march; with "There she stands right by your side" they change partners and march again:

It's cold
(It's cold)
It's cold
(It's cold)
It's cold frosty mornin'
In come the farmer drinkin' of the cider
It's cold ray-me-oo
An' now where to find her
An' now I lost my lover
An' where shall I find her
(repeat)
There she stan's right by your side
Don't she look jus' like a bride
Hug her an' kiss her an' call 'er your own
Then she'll marry you.


Moderato
Chorus:
mf
It's cold It's cold It's cold frost-y morn-ing
It's cold It's cold frost-y morn-ing
p
In come the farm-er drink-in' of the ci-der It's

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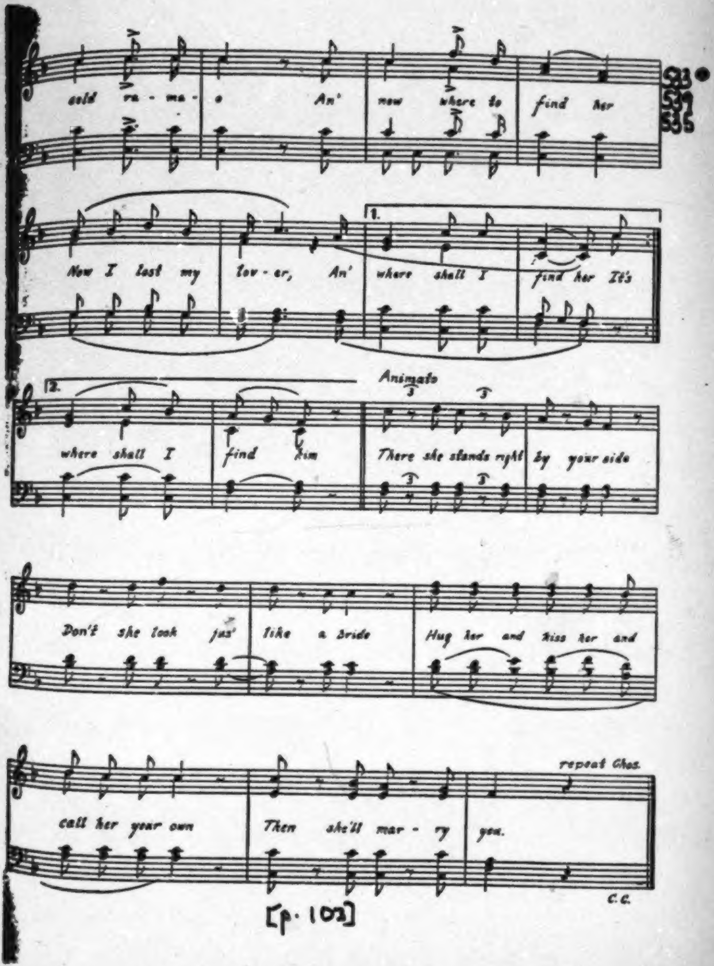
sold ra - ma - o An' now where to find her
Now I lost my lov - er, An' where shall I find her It's
1.
2.
where shall I find him
Animato
3
There she stands right by your side
Don't she look jus' like a bride
Hug her and kiss her and
call her your own
Then she'll mar - ry you.
repeat Chos.
C.C.

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PRETTY GREEN SHAWL

From the verses of this "play" it can be seen that it is a "promenading piece" and is the Negro counterpart of "It's Cold Frosty Mornin'." Partners are changed after singing the chorus a second time:

Chorus: Farewell, farewell
Fare you well my darlin'
Farewell, farewell
I love you to my heart

Now choose in another one honey my love
honey my love
honey my love
Choose in another one honey my love
So early in the mornin'.

O the lady—she wear a pretty green shawl
pretty green shawl
pretty green shawl
O the lady—she wear a pretty green shawl
So early in the mornin'.

Step gran' (or proud) wid y'r lover, honey my love
honey my love
honey my love
Step gran' wid y'r lover honey my love
So early in the mornin'.

Repeat Chorus:

FOUR AND TWENTY LAWYERS

535 The action is spirited, with much hand clapping that encourages those who "lead off." As far as I can see the figures are similar to those of the Virginia reel, with the exception of the beginning, where "Lead off one" is the signal for a man to walk briskly from the top of the line to the foot (men on one side, women on the other, as is usual). "Up and down" indicates the repetition of the short swinging jaunt; at "Lead off next," he takes the hand of the woman on the opposite end and

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535 they "Step in a hurry" and go "up and down" twice. The play then proceeds in the familiar way. Unless you have been told beforehand it is difficult to distinguish the words of the response "Lawyer's suit." When it is sung by all, as fast as it should be, and overlaps the leader's last word, a strange twist is given the tune. As can be seen, the words are no more than stage directions, but the rhythm is unusual, with the unmistakable stamp of Africa in the ominous cadence found in "Lawyer's suit."

● 533 535 639 The chorus is repeated as well as each leading line with its refrain:

Chorus: There is four and twenty lawyers
All in a line
Four and twenty lawyers
All in a line
(faster) Lead off one[3]
Lawyer's suit.
Up and down
Lawyer's suit.
Lead off next
Lawyer's suit.
Step in a hurry
Lawyer's suit.
Turn that lady
Lawyer's suit.
Turn her loose
Lawyer's suit.
Don't you hurt that lady
Lawyer's suit.
You hurt my heart
Lawyer's suit.
She's a very fine lady
Lawyer's suit.
Just from the country
Lawyer's suit.
Basket of oysters
Lawyer's suit.

---

[3] When another man leads off, the verses change to suit the leader. In place of "Step in a hurry" I have heard "Get in a hurry," then:

Very fine gentleman
Lawyer's suit.

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SHOUT JOSEPHINE SHOUT

●533 539 Julia remembered this verse from her youth on St. Simon's—with a fragment of another from the same song:

Josephine! Ma'am?
Don't you hear y'o' mammy call you
Why don't you go an' see what she want?
Josephine! Ma'am?
Want to shout? Yes, ma'am.
Shout Josephine—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Get a hump on y'o'self you red-eye' devil
Get a hump on y'o'self you big-eye' coon!

[524] (535) Years later, at Broadfield, I found that the verse given above was the chorus of an amusing play song, with pantomime, which is related to both the ring-play and the solo dances. "Josephine! Ma'am?" is sung first as is usual; the leader then tells where the pain (or ornament) is located and the participants instantly try to place their hands on the spot named:

Pain in the head—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the back—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the neck—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the hip—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Josephine
Ma'am?
Want t' shout?
Yes ma'am
What time?
Right now.
Shout Josephine
Shout!

Pain in the toe
Shout! Shout!

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Shout Josephine Shout

•533
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Pain in m' leg
Shout! Shout!
Pain in the heel
Shout! Shout!
Shout Josephine
Shout!
That sore toe
Shout! Shout!
That finger ring
Shout! Shout!
That water fall[4]
Shout! Shout!
Shout Josephine
Shout!
That ribbon bow
Shout! Shout!
That air ring[5]
Shout! Shout!
That slipper shoe
Shout! Shout!
That shiny eye
Shout Josephine
Shout!
Now shake the baby
Shake! Shake!
Now shake the baby
Shake! Shake!
Shake the baby—Shake!

The song is closed off with:

A'n' Jinny hoecake
Sweet! Sweet!
Take some an' lef' some
Sweet! Sweet!
A'n' Jinny hoecake
Sweet! Sweet!
Take some an' lef' some
Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!

(302)

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[4] An *old-time hair-do.*
[5] *Earring.*

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535 On Sapelo Island, I found in the Johnson family a combination of the old dance form with rather more modern steps than the original African pantomime warranted. Of the twins, Naomi did the patting while Isaac did the dancing;[8] an older brother rhythmically called out the cues in a sharp staccato, and another one lay on the floor of the wide veranda representing a dead cow. Anyone who has seen turkey buzzards disposing of "carrion"[9] will recognize the aptness of the following directions. Those who are at all squeamish had better skip this part. The bracketed asides were given for my information:

[533]
[539]

March aroun'! *(the cow)*
Jump across! *(see if she's daid)*
Get the eye! *(always go for that first)*
So glad! *(cow daid)*
Get the guts! *(they like 'em next best)*
Go to eatin'! *(on the meat)*
All right!—cow mos' gone!
Dog comin'!
Scare the dog!
Look aroun' for mo' meat!
All right!—Belly full!
—"Goin' to tell the res'."

And with an eye to the dramatic exit, Isaac danced into the house.

---

[8] *In later years I saw the Buzzard Lope done by Isaac's teacher, Reuben Grovenor—a descendant of the Sapelo Bilali who wrote a "diary" in Arabic. Many times have I seen others do this peculiar dance, but Reuben's performance is far and away the most finished. With effortless grace he gives a stylized pattern of the bird's awkward steps, without any attempt at realism. His is indeed a high form of rhythmic approximation, and those who have seen it at the Cabin are fortunate.*

[9] *Miss Kingsley tells us that in West Africa turkey buzzards are called "Jack Crows"—the natives call them "yubu." In the West Indies they are called either "John Crows" or "Carrion Crows."*

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GIMME HIM

● 533 Another primitive song that offers the proper rhythm sounds slangy, but I am
539 positive that such was not its intent:

Jesus died a happy die
He died fuh sin but not His own
Gimme Him gimme Him Aw sho
Gimme Him gimme Him until I die.
(Repeat the last two lines)
He died on the Roman cross
That we might live
Gimme Him gimme Him Aw sho
Gimme Him until I die.
(Repeat the last two lines)

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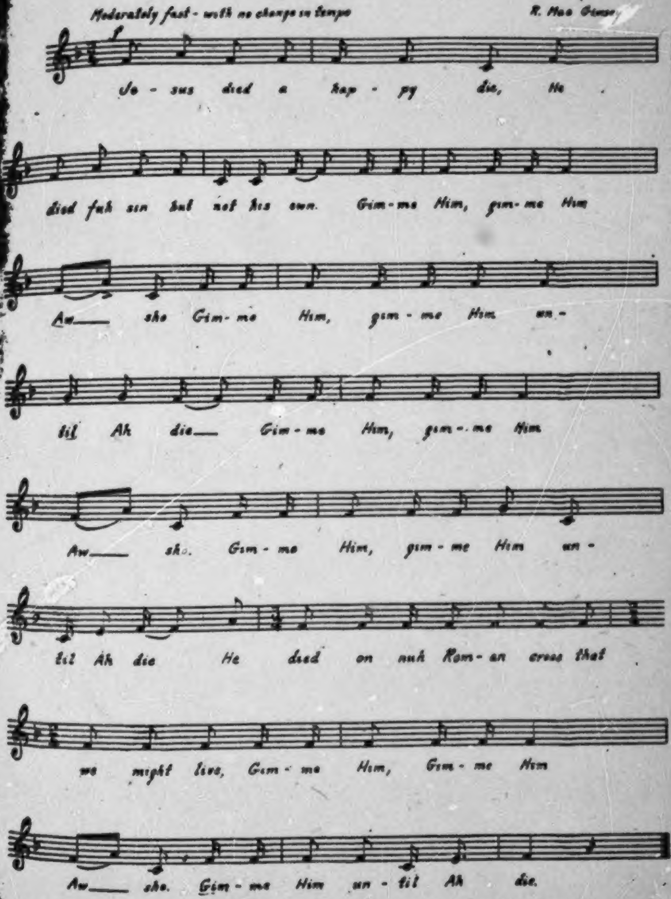
21. GIMME HIM


Moderately fast - with no change in tempo
R. Mac Gimsey
Je - sus died a hap - py die, He
died fuh sin but not his own. Gim-me Him, gim-me Him
Aw — sho Gim-me Him, gim - me Him un -
til Ah die — Gim - me Him, gim - - me Him
Aw — sho. Gim - me Him, gim - me Him un -
til Ah die He died on nuh Rom - an cross that
we might live, Gim - me Him, Gim - me Him
Aw — sho. Gim - me Him un - til Ah die.

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STICKIT BALL A HACK

•533 [539] Like "Ham Bone," "Ball the Jack" and "Juba dis an' Juba dat," this curious song is half-spoken in a lively fashion, to rhythmical hand clapping. When the verse is finished "Then you kick it off":

Jack t' the rack back
Stickit ball a hack
Low ball high ball
Scallion jack.

HAM BONE HAM BONE

533 524 (115) As is obvious, twelve-year-old Maria's version of these rhythmical lines is modern. Luck was with me when I found George, another twelve-year-old, who could give the older verses which are recited in the same way—alternated with similar patting. The only difference is that Maria balances herself on one foot; with her left hand she holds her cotton skirt tight around the "ham bone" section of her anatomy, places her right foot on the other leg below the knee and with her right hand deftly smacks out the intricate rhythm on her "rusty butt."[10] George, however, takes the line of least resistance, and leans with his back against a wall. However, in that position he is able to lift his "ham bone" a little higher and do a rather more complicated bit of patting. His hand flies back and forth like a shuttle between his chest and his rump.

These are Maria's words:

[539]

Ham bone ham bone pat um on uh shoulder
.....................................[11]
Gimme a pretty girl show y'u how t' hold her
....
I went down town one day
....
I went with my mother—too.
....
My mother bought me a billy goat
....
If my billy goat don't butt
....
Momma goin' to beat my rusty butt
....

---

[10] *The night she wore a corduroy skirt, the patting could not be heard and her performance missed fire.*

[11] *These dots represent patting.*

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As far as "I went with my mother—too" the lines are repeated, but when it comes to enumerating what she bought, there is this change:

My mother bought me a radio
. . . .
If my radio won't play
. . . .
Momma goin' t' beat my NRA
. . . .

George's lines, which are clearly of an older vintage, are given in the time-honored question and answer manner of Africa. Half-way through they merge into an old play song:

Ham bone ham bone wha's you bin?
. . . .
All roun' the worl' an' back agin.
. . . .
Ham bone ham bone what'd y'u do?
. . . .
I got a chance an' I fairly flew.
. . . .
Ham bone ham bone where you stay?
. . . .
I met a pretty girl an' I couldn' get away.
. . . .
Ham bone ham bone what'd you do?
. . . .
Hopt up to Miss Lucy's doo'.
. . . .
Ax Miss Lucy will she marry me?
. . . .
I wouldn't care if poppa didn't care.
. . . .

At this point George uses the narrative of the old play song: "Brother Froggy went to town—Un hunh!"[12]

---

[12] *Brother Froggy went to town—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
To buy his wife a weddin' gown—Un hunh, Un hunh!
What y'u goin' t' have de weddin' feas'?—Un hunh, Un hunh!
Two big bread an' not a bit a grease—Un hunh, Un hunh!
Firs' come aroun' wuz Mr. Bug—Un hunh, Un hunh!
He fell in de lemonade tub—Un hunh, Un hunh!

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Nex' come in wuz Mr. Snake
....
Pattin' all round' dat weddin' cake.
....
Nex' cum in wuz Mr. Bug
....
Hoppin' all roun' dat whiskey jug.
....
Nex' come in wuz Mr. Tick
....
He ate so much till it made 'im sick.
....

The youngster said he knew many more verses, but these are more than enough to show how lines of proper length can be utilized.

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JUBA DIS AN' JUBA DAT

Juba dis an' Juba dat
An' Juba kill d' yalla cat
An' get over double-trouble
Juba!
She served d' meal
She gimme d' husk
Cooked d' bread
She gimme d' crus'
She fried d' meat
Gimme d' skin
That's 'e way momma
Took me in
Now Juba! [13]

By rapidly crossing his hands to first one knee and then the other, Snooks pats out an intricate rhythm to the above staccato lines. When he gets to "Now Juba!" he does some clever footwork that matches the coördination of his hands.

(Illustration 11) A

[13] *Maude Cuney Hare in* Negro Musicians and Their Music *says that the dance Juba is known to be over a century old. Cable in his "Creole Slave Songs" mentions that "The guiouba was probably the famed juba of Georgia and the Carolinas."*

A, [For Illustration 11, see Category 535, plate facing p. 65--Analyst]

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FIDDLE SONGS–FRAGMENTS

● 533 Ten years ago, when I hunted up the local fiddler, Green Harris, who was already seventy-six, I tried to find out about the tunes he used to play for the "sinful" young Negroes on St. Simon's. He said: "You caught me without my studyin' cap—they jus' gone." He would not even bring out his fiddle.[15] Finally he admitted he [534] had loaned it: "They're holdin' a revival this week an' I don't want it around the house." The implication was that temptation might be too strong for him—besides, it was improper to have a fiddle in your possession at such a time. After two unsuccessful visits I heard him play old-fashioned dance tunes which had been favorites south of the Mason and Dixon Line in ante-bellum days. Here are the harmless, fragmentary verses he gave me: 533 539

Tune my fiddle, tune it good
The little neighbor in the neighborhood.

I do I do I tries to do
    Put on de silver slippers.
An' I do I do an' I do no mor'
    Put on de silver slippers.
I do I do my huckleberry do
    Put on de silver slippers.
My ole Miss' promis' me
    Put on de silver slippers.
When she die she set me free
    Put on de silver slippers.
She live so long till her head got bal'
    Put on de silver slippers.
It look like she never die
    Put on de silver slippers.
I do I do I do no mor' my huckleberry do
    Put on de silver slippers.
Oh how happy I feel
    Put on de silver slippers.

[15] *Joel Chandler Harris tells us in* The Critic, *December 15, 1883, that "The banjo may be the typical instrument of the plantation negroes, but I have never seen a plantation negro play it. I have heard them make sweet music with the quills—Pan's pipes; I have heard them play passably on the fiddle. . . . and beat . . . on the triangle . . . I have heard them blow a tin-trumpet with surprising skill; but I have never seen a banjo." Cable, himself, grants that the favorite instrument of the negroes of the Southern states is the fiddle.*

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Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.
No use grievin'
Got t' do widout me
Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.
I had a little fella
His name was Isabella
He went run awa' wid anudda nigga fella
So bye-bye my honey I'm gwine.
If you ain't got the money
You can' call me honey
Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.

Goin' to the bathin' house
Goin' to the kitchen
My foot slip an' I fell down
I wouldn' go there no mo'.

Choose in the girl with the rosy cheeks
Choose in the boy with the money
Choose in the girl with the coal-black eye
Choose her an' call her honey.

Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Te-la lallah bam!
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Te-la lallah bam!
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Te-la lallah bam!

My oldest aunt heard Virginia ex-slaves sing this verse seventy-five years ago:

Went to see my Sally
My Sally wasn't home
I set myself in the big armchair
And I played on the old jaw-bone.

533
539
(534)

Old Jim Gardiner rapped the bones to the rhythm of the two similar jingles that follow:

Once I went out huntin'
I heard de possum sneeze
I holler back to Susan
Put on de pot o' peas.

I went down to Missy house
Missy was in bed
I took de marrow bone
An' beat her in de head.

Chorus: Ding dang me one
Ding dang.
Ding dang me two
Ding dang.
Ding dang me three
Ding dang.
Ding dang me four
Ding dang.

Toad frog sittin' on the railroad track
Train come along an' break his back.

Chorus:

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BILE DEM CABBAGE DOWN

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(535)

A St. Simon's Negro called this a "Cracker Dance" and gave me the following verses:

Bile dem cabbage down
Bile dem cabbage down
Look here gal—don' wan' no foolin'
Bile dem cabbage down.

Went to Susy's house
Susy wasn't home
Look here gal—don' wan' no foolin'
Bile dem cabbage down.

My old Missus promis' me
Bile dem cabbage down
When she die she goin' to set me free
Bile dem cabbage down.

She live so long till her he'd got bal'
Bile dem cabbage down
She gib up de idea o' dyin' at all
Bile dem cabbage down.

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WAY DOWN IN THE OLE PEEDEE

•533
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Julia sang this when she was a little girl—"long time ago":

Chorus:
Way down in the Ole Peedee
Way down in the Ole Peedee
Summer night the moon shine bright
Sally you can see.

I wish that gal was mine
I wish that gal was mine
Summer night the moon shine bright
Sally you can see.

(repeat chorus)

Good-bye mh honey I'm gone
Good-bye mh honey I'm gone
If you call me honey spen' my money
Good-bye mh honey I'm gone.

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22. WAY DOWN IN THE OLE PEEDEE

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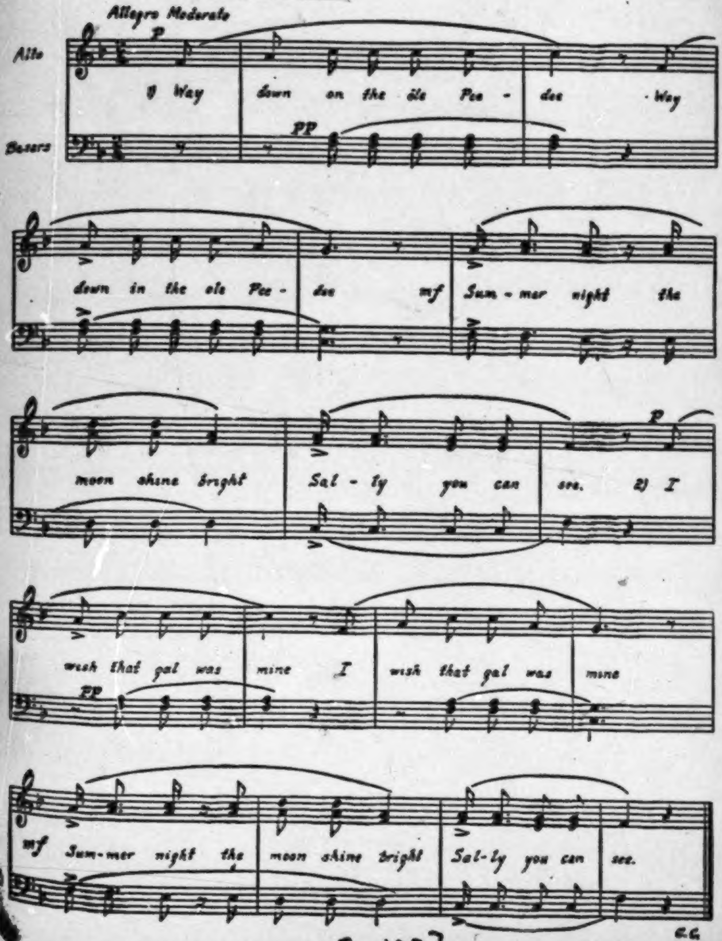
Allegro Moderato
Alto
Basses
P
PP
mf
1) Way down on the ole Pee - dee Way down in the ole Pee - dee Sum - mer night the moon shine bright Sal - ly you can see. 2) I wish that gal was mine I wish that gal was mine
Sum-mer night the moon shine bright Sal-ly you can see.
E.G.

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JOHNNY COME A LONG TIME

Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

Johnny is your sweetheart
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your sweetheart
Johnny come a long time.

Run home muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.

Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

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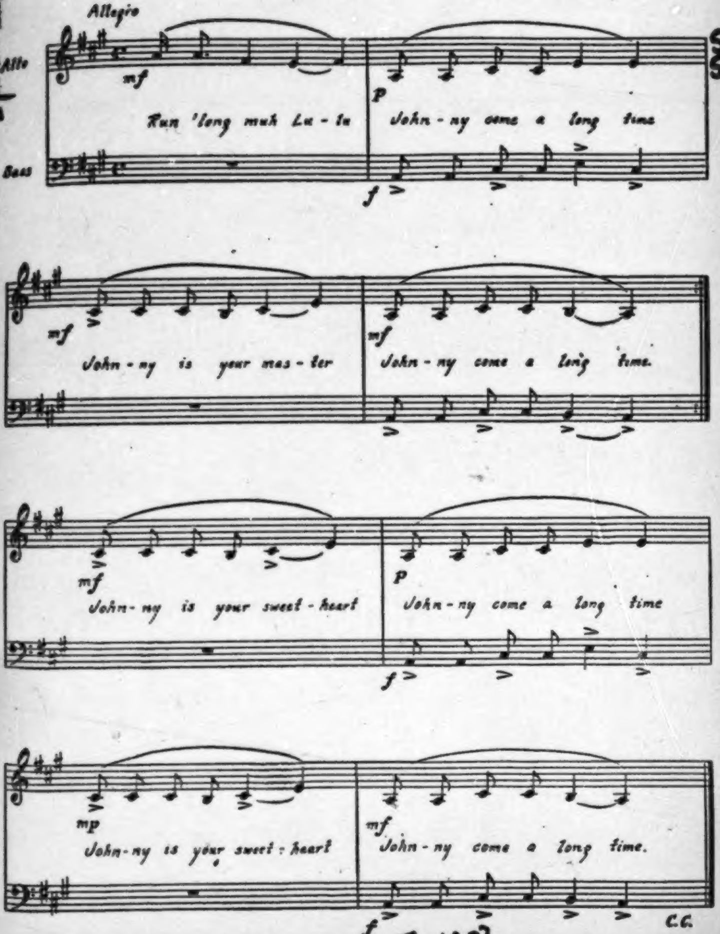
23. JOHNNY COME A LONG TIME


Allegro
Alto
Bass
mf
Run 'long muh Lu - lu
p
f
John - ny come a long time
mf
John - ny is your mas - ter
mf
John - ny come a long time.
mf
John- ny is your sweet - heart
p
f
John - ny come a long time
mp
John- ny is your sweet - heart
mf
f
John - ny come a long time.
C.C.

[p. 125]

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CHAPTER FIVE

Religious Songs

●533 About 1830, before "Daddy" Rice popularized the secular songs of the Negro, 175 the music of the slave was considered to be of no more importance than the carvings of his African contemporaries. It was not until certain Northerners—early in the War Between the States—began to write of the beauties of the religious slave songs of the Port Royal section of South Carolina that Southerners awakened to the fact that the Negro race was essentially musical, and that its compositions could be taken seriously.

175 Up to this period there was very little written concerning the slaves, and anything more must be gathered inferentially from the migrations of the pioneers, who naturally did not leave their slaves behind them. The first expansion of our Southern frontier took place in the neighborhood of 1632 into the Albemarle section of the Carolinas, and thence southward along the coast to Beaufort, South Carolina. In the first years of the nineteenth century the rich lands of the Indians were opened up in West Georgia and Alabama; and at that time began the trek west over the Federal Road, a movement which accounts for the wide distribution of the favorite slave songs of the eastern seaboard. The migration was all in a westerly direction, and it is not reasonable to imagine that the camp-meeting songs and white spirituals, popular in Kentucky and Tennessee at that period, came east against the tide. In fact, investigation in the Bahamas indicates that the slave songs were well established on the mainland by 1776. The loyalists of the Georgia and Carolina coast fled at the end of the Revolutionary War (1782) to the out islands of the Bahamas, and history tells us that the slaves they took with them trebled the black population. I find that the best of the early religious songs are sung on the out islands today, much as they are here in isolated sections. [533]

121 Since I am a Quaker and am not familiar with the ritual which characterizes

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church
observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave
[538] songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of
Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled
as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter
and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which
may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of
[128] them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the
ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so
much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of
[171] them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the
section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to
795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation
171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what
explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans'
761 concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon
796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in,
533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The
younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come
to the Cabin and "show them the way."

---

[1] *Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubtedly
[152] conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his
rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or
[782] two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some
appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation
should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with
a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.*

[2] *Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence
[787] told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish
towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She dried
the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.*

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

533 796 At one of our singing festivals, Liverpool, who was well over a hundred at the time, became excited as he heard again the old prayer-meeting song, left his seat, joined in the swaying group of sixty-five singers, and gave a demonstration of the "right hand of fellowship" which he performed with the dignity seen in the minuet. First he gave his right hand to the singer on his right; then, bowing sedately, he crossed his left hand over to the same member. Both hands were then shaken as the singers bowed with the rhythim before passing to the next neighbor and repeating the same ceremony.

(539)
'Tis well an' good I come here tonight
come here tonight
come here tonight
Well an' good I come here tonight
For to do my Master's will.
O Brother Quarterman show me the way
show me the way
show me the way
O my brother show me the way—
The way to the Promised Land.

(794) At old-time prayer meetings the following song brought out all of the members—one at a time—on the floor, breaking up any tendency to stiffness. Each rose as his or her name was called and moved around the circle, returning to the group when another member's name was about to be called.

This same song was called an "ant'em" on Eleuthera, (one of the Bahamas). 533 539 When I asked the singer if it was old, she said: "Methuselum sung 'um."

Oh mh Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Sister Bessie where were you
My sister where were you
My sister where were you
When the Lord was passin' by.

(Illustration 16) A

A. [For Illustration 16, see Category 142, plate facing p. 97--Analyst]

794 "Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at
796 the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

195 BELIEVER I KNOW

159 This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall mag-
(533) nolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of
(291) the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States
(829) began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift[4] at the time her family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

533 I know, I know Lord
539 Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
Believer I know

---

[4] *The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.*

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It's thorny an' ruggy
Believer I know
It's thorny an' ruggy
Believer I know
The way to get to Heaven
Believer I know
Go in the wil'erness
Believer I know
Fall on your bending[5]
Believer I know
Fall on your bending
Believer I know
Cry Lord have mercy
Believer I know
Cry Lord have mercy
Believer I know
The way to get to Heaven
Believer I know
Love everybody
Believer I know
Love the Christian pastor[6]
Believer I know
Love everybody
Believer I know
The narrow road is Heaven road
Believer I know
Here an' there a traveller
Believer I know
The broad road is Hell road
Believer I know
Thousand walk together,there
Believer I know
Glory Hallelujah
Believer I know
I done cross Jurden
Believer I know.

---

[5] *Knees are implied.*
[6] *The white minister.*

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25. BELIEVER I KNOW

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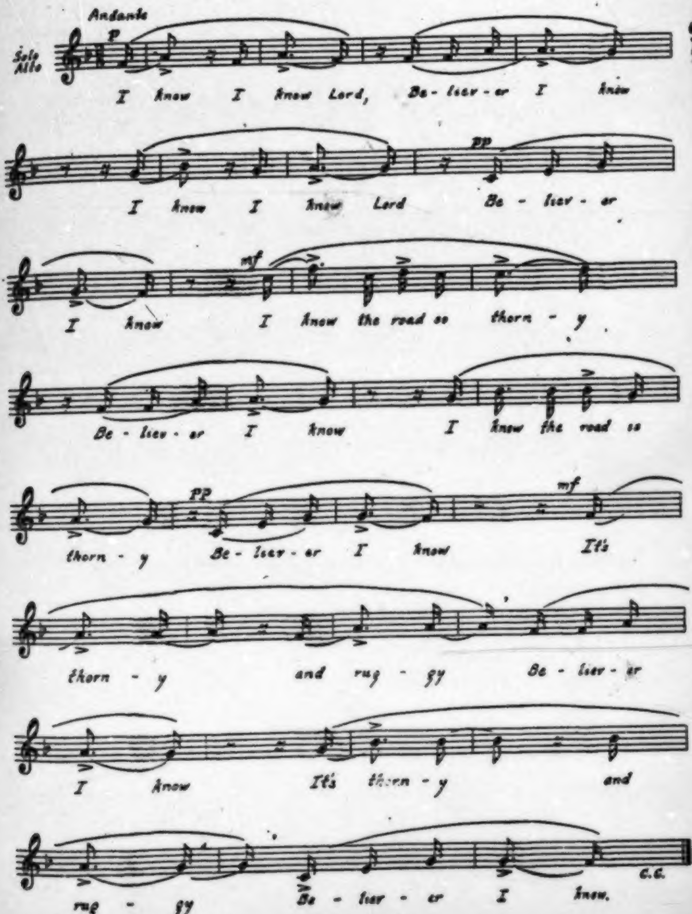
Andante
Solo Alto
p
I know I know Lord, Be-liev-er I know
pp
I know I know Lord Be-liev-er
mf
I know I know the road so thorn-y
Be-liev-er I know I know the road so
pp
mf
thorn-y Be-liev-er I know It's
thorn-y and rug-gy Be-liev-er
I know It's thorn-y and
rug-gy Be-liev-er I know.
C.G.

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NORAH, HIST THE WINDAH

Norah, hist the windah
Norah, hist the windah
Norah, hist the windah
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Oh God comman' Brother Norah one day
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' told Brother Norah to build an ark
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Chorus: Oh Norah, hist the windah
Oh Norah, hist the windah
Oh Norah, hist the windah
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Well Norah commence to buil' his ark
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he buil' his ark on the ha'd dry lan'
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

An' the foolish man come a ridin' by
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
Well he point his han' an' he scorn at Norah
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he call ole Norah the foolish man
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
You buildin' yo' ark on the ha'd dry lan'
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

Well, the little turtle dove done droop his wing
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he gone on Zion's Hill to sing
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

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26. NORAH, HIST THE WINDAH

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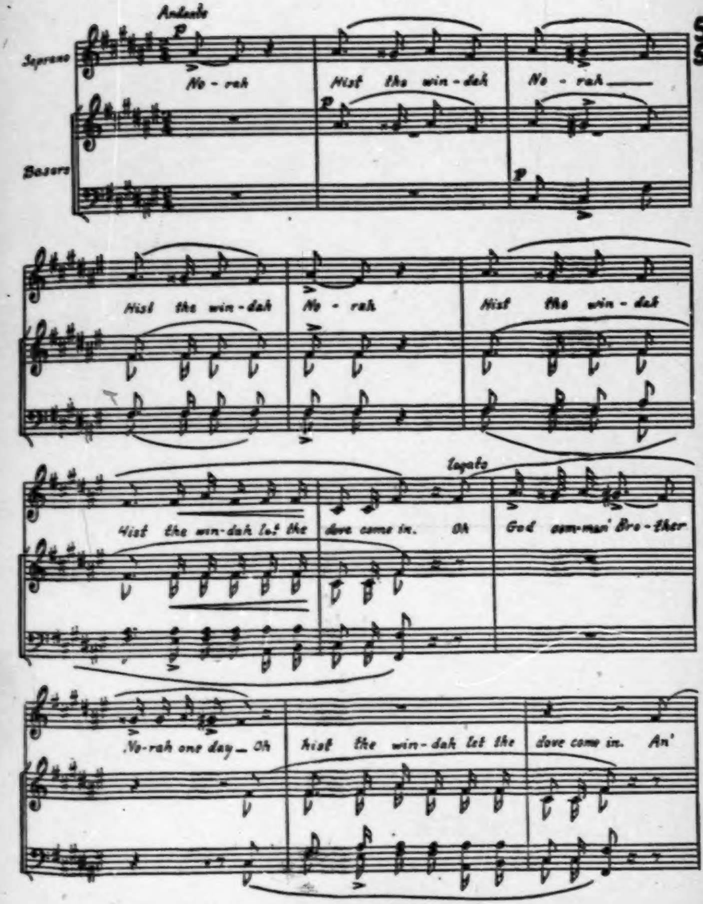
Andante
p
Soprano
Basses
No - rah
Hist the win - dah
No - rah
Hist the win - dah
No - rah
Hist the win - dah
legato
Hist the win-dah le' the dove come in. Oh God com-man' Bro-ther
No-rah one day — Oh hist the win-dah let the dove come in. An'

[p. 135]

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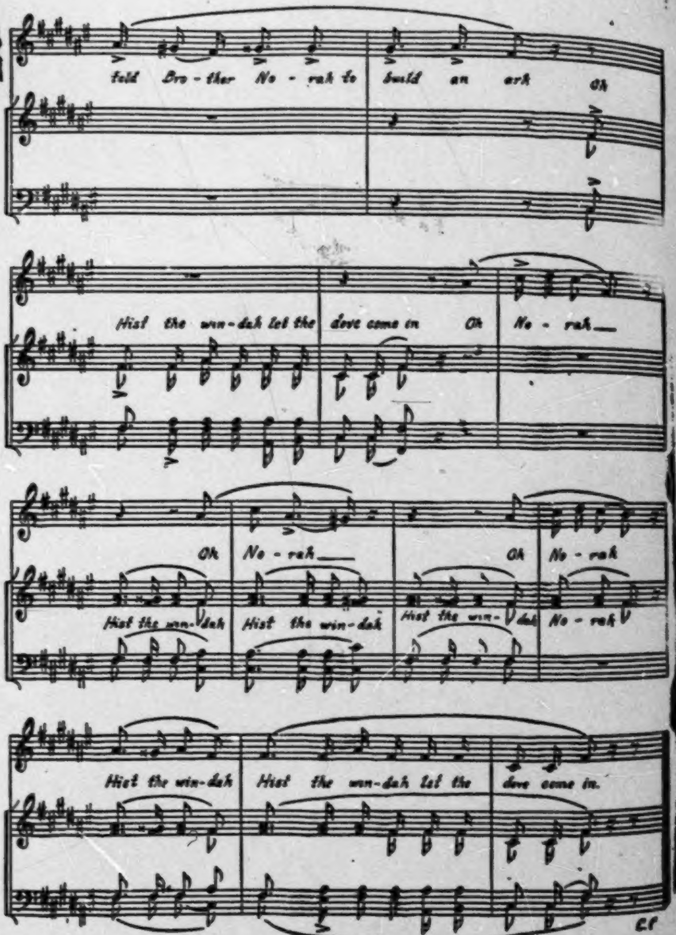
told Bro - ther No - rah to build an ark Oh
Hist the win-dah let the dove come in Oh No - rah
Oh No - rah Oh No - rah
Hist the win-dah Hist the win-dah Hist the win-dah No - rah
Hist the win-dah Hist the win-dah let the dove come in.
CF

[p. 136]

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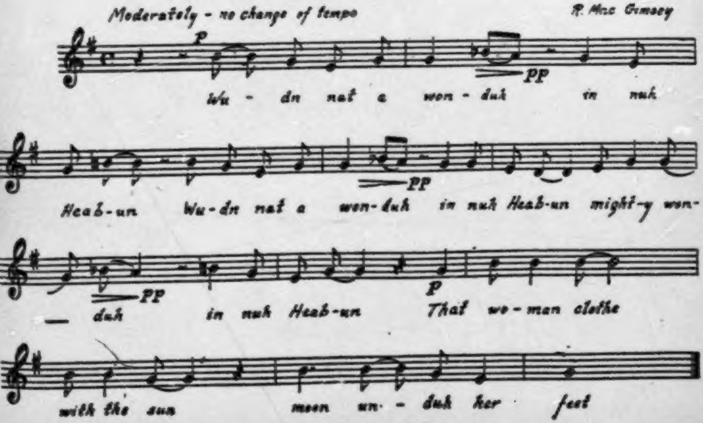
28. WASN' THAT A WONDER

Chorus: Wasn' that a wonder
in the Heaven
Wasn' that a wonder
in the Heaven
Mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

Read about the wonder
in the Heaven
Read about the wonder
in the Heaven
Mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

John saw the wonder
in the Heaven
John saw the wonder
in the Heaven
It's a mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

Well, John' mother may gone before me
But you can't get no higher in Glory
If you get there befo' I do
Jus' tell my Lord I'm comin' too.


Moderately - no change of tempo
R. Mac Gimsey
P
PP
Wu - dn nat a won - duh in nuh
Heab-un Wu-dn nat a won-duh in nuh Heab-un might-y won-
PP
— duh in nuh Heab-un That wo-man clothe
PP
P
with the sun moon un - duh her feet

[p. 189]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

● 533
539

I HEARD THE ANGELS SINGIN'

Chorus: One mornin' soon
One mornin' soon
One mornin' soon
Ah heard the angels singin'.

All in my room
All in my room
All in my room
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, Ah wuz down on my knees
Down on my knees
Down on my knees.
Ah heard the angels singin'.

No dyin' there
No dyin' there
No dyin' there
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Ah heard the angels singin' Lawd
Ah heard the angels singin'
Ah heard the angels singin' Lawd
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Well, there's no weepin' there
No weepin' there
No weepin' there
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, it wuz all 'roun' me shine
All 'roun' me shine
All 'roun' me shine
Ah heard the angels singin'.

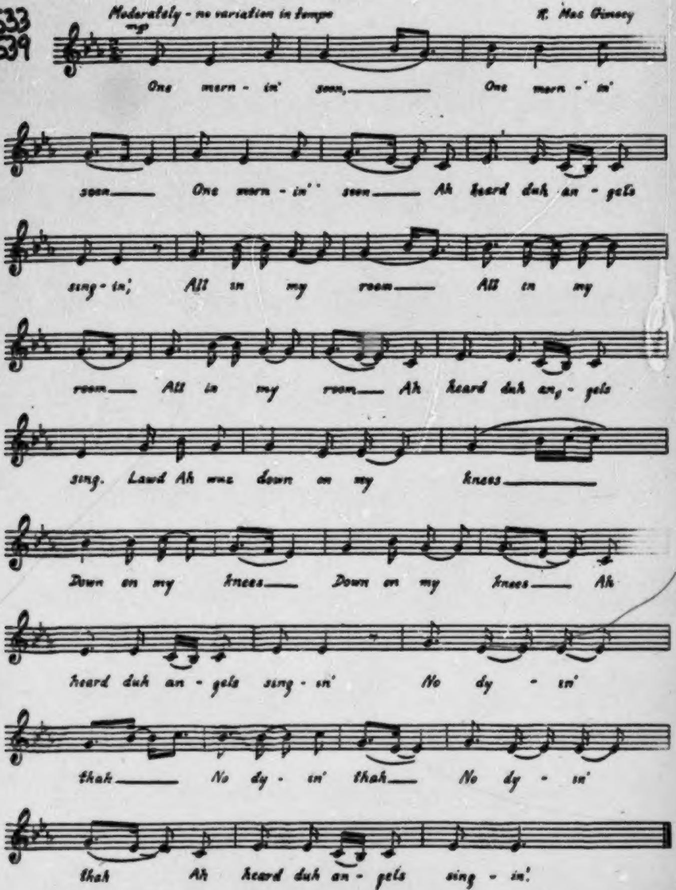
Lawd, it wuz all over my head
All over my head
All over my head
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, it wuz all aroun' my feet
All aroun' my feet
All aroun' my feet
Ah heard the angels singin'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

29. I HEARD THE ANGELS SINGIN'

•533
539


Moderately - no variation in tempo
mp
R. Mac Gimsey
One morn - in' soon, One morn - ' in'
soon One morn - in'' soon Ah heard duh an - gels
sing - in'; All in my room All in my
room All in my room Ah heard duh an, - gels
sing. Lawd Ah wuz down on my knees
Down on my knees Down on my knees Ah
heard duh an - gels sing - in' No dy - in'
thah No dy - in' thah No dy - in'
thah Ah heard duh an - gels sing - in'.

[p. 141]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island

● 533
539

CAN'T HIDE SINNER

You may run to the rock
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the rock cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the sea
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the sea cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

Oh sinner man
Can't hide
What you going to do
Can't hide
In the Judgment day
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the grave
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the grave cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the Church
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the Church cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the mount'n
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the mount'n cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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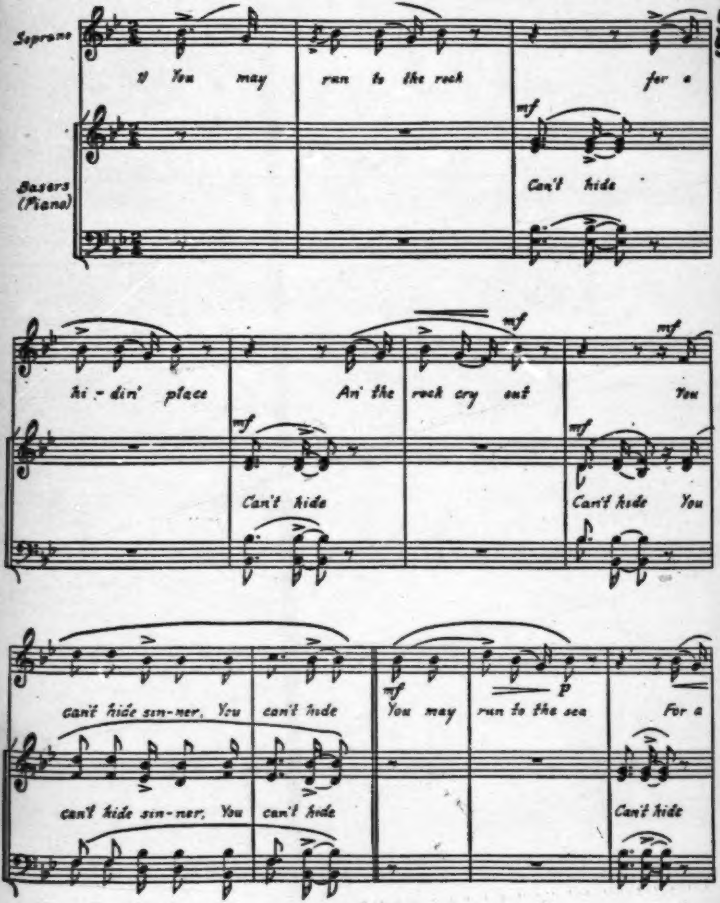
539


Soprano
Basses (Piano)
1) You may run to the rock for a hi - din' place An' the rock cry out You can't hide sin-ner, You can't hide You may run to the sea For a
Can't hide Can't hide Can't hide You can't hide sin-ner, You can't hide Can't hide
mf
p

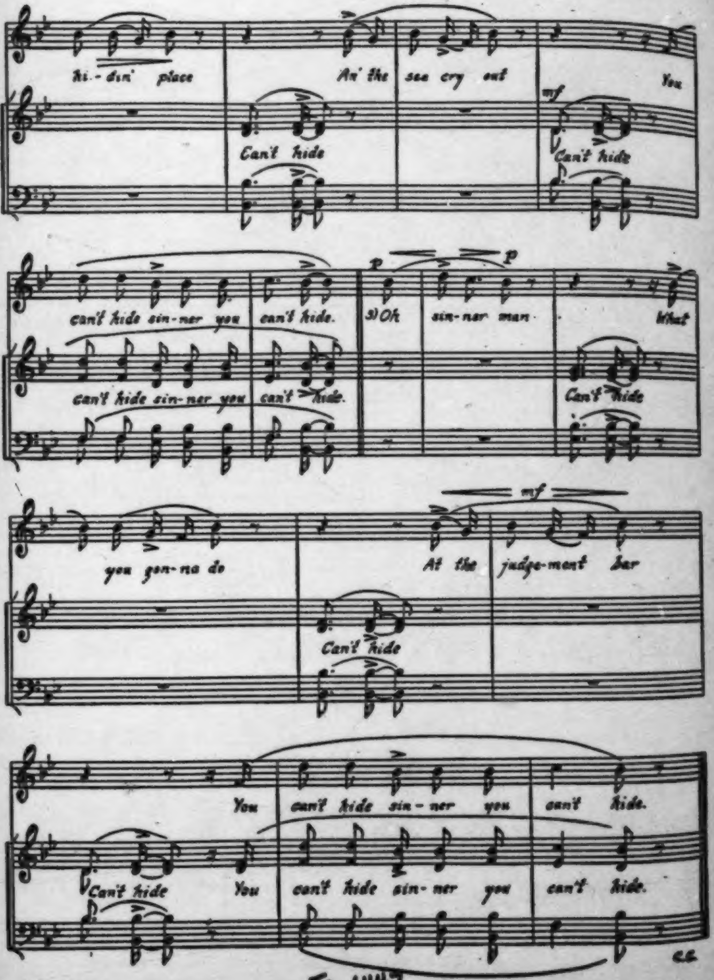
9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

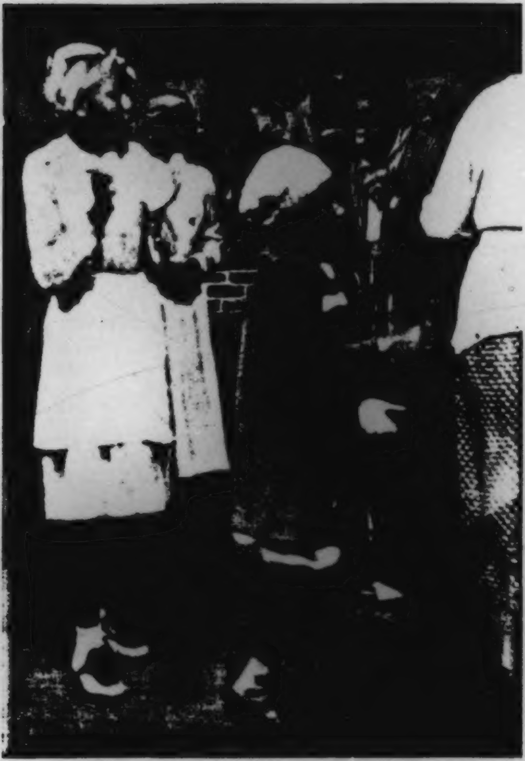
Georgia

St. Simon's Island

533
539


hi-din' place
An' the
sea cry out
You
mf
Can't hide
Can't hide
can't hide sin-ner you
can't hide.
can't hide sin-ner you
can't hide.
p
p
3) Oh
sin-ner man
What
Can't hide
you gon-na do
At the
mf
judge-ment bar
Can't hide
You
can't hide sin-ner you
can't hide.
Can't hide
You
can't hide sin-ner you
can't hide.
cc

[p. 144]



25. *The Younger Generation Doing the Ring-Shout at the Cabin*

[facing p. 145]

JOHN, JOHN

159 159 567 The temptation is strong to tell the clever sayings of Quarterman, but the songs he sang, and not what he said, must take precedence. However, one incident which has a bearing on history must be mentioned. Quarterman's mother was a Butler slave, like Liverpool, but before Quarterman was born she was taken by Roswell King in exchange for services as manager of the Butler estate, and placed on his Liberty County plantation.

177 567 The last time that Liverpool and Quarterman were together at my Corner for a "sing," Liverpool made use of the opportunity to deliver his customary eulogy of Pierce Butler and his family. I saw that Quarterman was uneasy and fidgety. The minute that Liverpool showed signs of stopping, Quarterman was on his feet and told the audience what a superior "Maussa" he had had. Shades of Fanny Kemble and all departed abolitionists! The irony of the situation is apparent to those who have read what Fanny Kemble said in her *Journal* about Quarterman's master, "Mr. K." I saw the meeting of "Mr. K.'s" two grandchildren, Miss Julia King and her brother Audley, with Quarterman, and the delight of all three was extremely significant. We read a good deal these days about the way the Negroes "hate" the white people. But let me say that such was not the universal rule in the old days under the patriarchal form of society.[7] The type of education given today, instead of closing the breach between the races, appears to be widening it. I have found only one ex-slave who shows bitterness, and that is toward a distracted mistress who, during war-time, exacted two tasks when one had been the usual requirement.

159 533 Quarterman sang many pretty hymns, but in the next breath he sang slave songs that came "out of Maffew. You fine 'em right dere." When I tried to explain that the words did not make the tune, he was puzzled. According to him all you had to do was to go to the Bible and there was your song. There is more to the idea than appears on the surface. You heard a verse read and at once its rhythm fitted something that was sung in Africa. Perhaps this is why the Negroes call the old songs "familiar tunes."

---

[7] *It is evident from the story of "The Old-Time Negro," by Thomas Nelson Page, that "the relation which once existed all over the South between the old-time Southerner and the old-time darkey . . . still exists where the latter survives."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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•533
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Chorus: John, John you will see John
Aye John
John, John you will see John
Aye John.

Fiah in nuh Eas' and fiah in nuh Wes'
Aye John
Fiah goinah burn out tuh wilduhness
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

Gawd in nuh wil-d'ness jes begin tuh look out
Aye John
Yes, duh ram hohn blow an' nuh childun shout
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

When Quarterman (Illustration 28) finished singing these verses into my recording machine, he said: "You can't take dat!" And when I played it back to him, he exclaimed: "O My Missus—de debbil!"

Katherine sings the following verses to the same tune:

Talk about John but you will see John
Aye John
Talk about John but you will see John
Aye John.
When I get to Heaven goin' to walk all aroun'
Aye John
Angel in the Heaven can't order me down
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

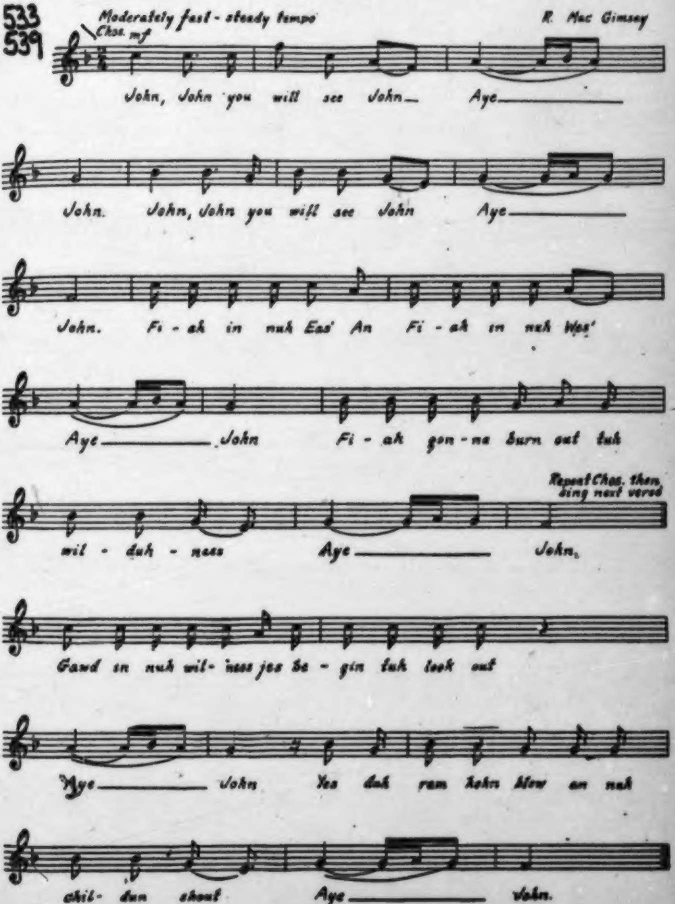
When I get to Heaven goin' to sit an' tell
Aye John
Goin' to a'gue with the Father an' chatter with the Son
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

31. JOHN, JOHN

● 533
539


Moderately fast - steady tempo
R. Mac Gimsey
Chos. mf
John, John you will see John_ Aye_
John. John, John you will see John Aye_
John. Fi - ah in nuh Eas' An Fi - ah in nuh Wes'
Aye_ John Fi - ah gon - na burn out tuh
Repeat Chos. then sing next verse
wil - duh - ness Aye_ John.
Gawd in nuh wil- ness jes be - gin tuh look out
Aye_ John Yes duh ram horn blow an nuh
chil- dun shout Aye_ John.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Chorus: No hidin' place
No hidin' place
Almos' t' the Judgment Bah
No hidin' place.

'Cause Ah don't know what my sister wan'nuh stay here for

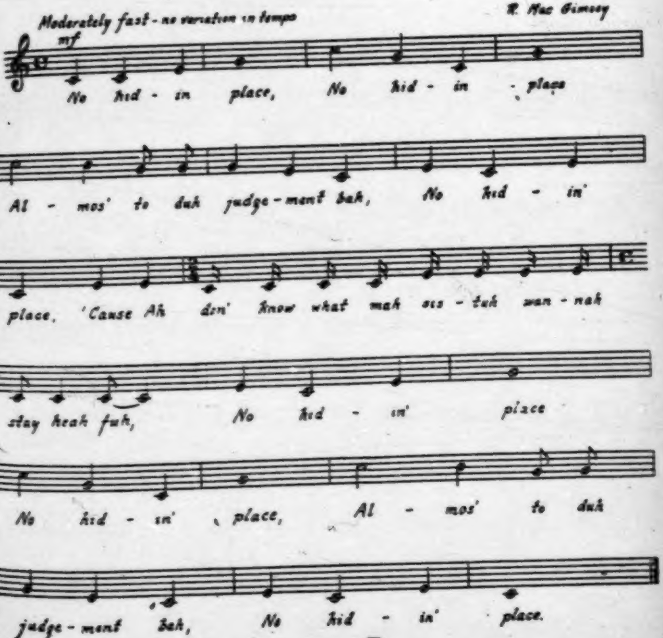
Repeat Chorus:

Ah'm goin' t' run t' the rock for a hidin' place

Repeat Chorus:

Fox got's hole in the groun'
Bird got a nest in the air
There's nare one thing got a hidin' place
But these sinners got none.

Repeat Chorus:


Moderately fast - no variation in tempo
R. Mac Gimsey
mf
No hid - in place, No hid - in - place
Al - mos' to duh judge - ment bah, No hid - in'
place, 'Cause Ah don' know what mah sis - tuh wan - nah
stay heah fuh, No hid - in' place
No hid - in' place, Al - mos' to duh
judge - ment bah, No hid - in' place.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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LIVIN' HUMBLE

781
533

"Gettin' religion" is a soul-stirring matter with the Negro. When he feels the serious need of salvation he responds to the appeal of the minister to come forward to the "Mou'ners' Bench"—also called the "Anxious" or "Mercy Seat." There, at the bench directly in front of the pulpit, he kneels while the congregation sings an appropriate song. In the old days he wandered at night until he managed to "come through." Many lines in the oldest songs refer to customs that are now practically obsolete. I cannot imagine a young Negro today wandering alone at night until his "head got wet by the mid'l-night dew."

533
539

Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Christ is a waitin' to receive
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
None but tuh righteous shall git thah
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
O my head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
I pray to my God until I come through
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Ever since I been converted
I been tryin' to live 'umble.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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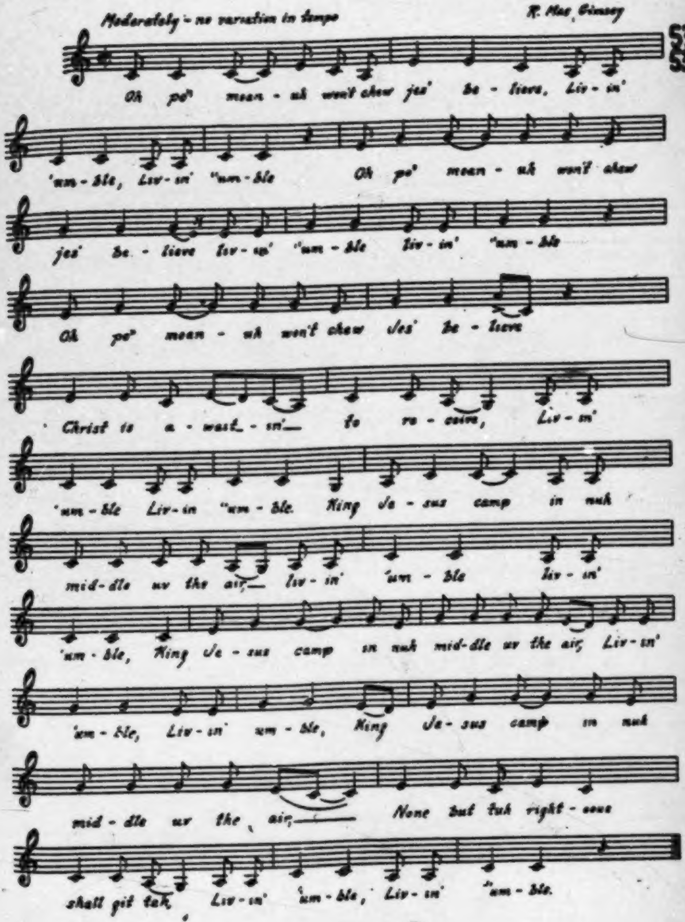
Moderately - no variation in tempo
R. Mac Gimsey
Oh po' moan - uh won't chew jes' be - lieve, Liv - in'
'um - ble, Liv - in' 'um - ble Oh po' moan - uh won't chew
jes' be - lieve liv - in' 'um - ble liv - in' 'um - ble
Oh po' moan - uh won't chew jes' be - lieve
Christ is a - wait - in' to re - ceive, Liv - in'
'um - ble Liv - in 'um - ble. King Je - sus camp in nuh
mid - dle uv the air, liv - in' 'um - ble liv - in'
'um - ble, King Je - sus camp in nuh mid - dle uv the air, Liv - in'
'um - ble, Liv - in' um - ble, King Je - sus camp in nuh
mid - dle uv the air, None but tuh right - eous
shall git tah, Liv - in' 'um - ble, Liv - in' 'um - ble.

[p. 153]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

•533 781 From the reference to "Mornin' star was a witness too" and "I heard a voice an' I saw no one," followed by "It mus' be Jesus passin' by," it is apparent that this unusual version of "Swing Low" was another of the songs appropriate to the "comin' through" of "sinners," who had agonized at night in order to achieve the proper exaltation.

533
539

Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
It mus' be Jesus passin' by
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
I heard a voice an' I saw no one
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
Mornin' star was a witness too
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
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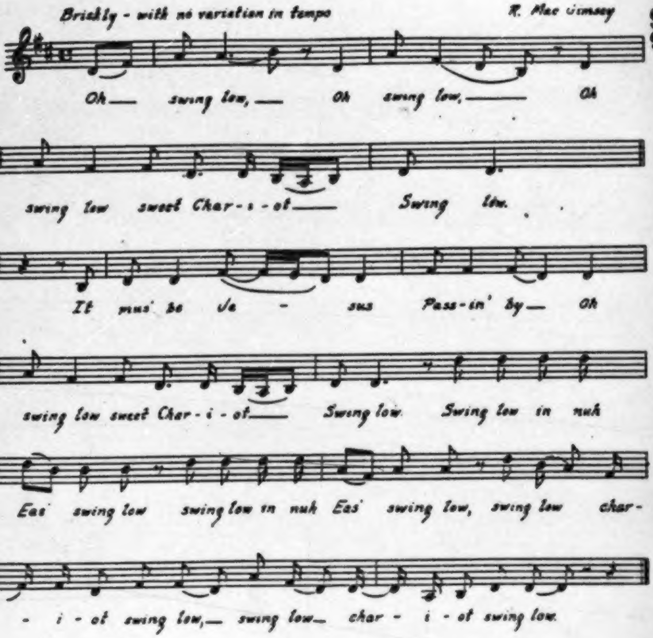
35. SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT


Briskly - with no variation in tempo
R. MacGimsey
Oh — swing low, — Oh swing low, — Oh
swing low sweet Char - i - ot — Swing low.
It mus' be Je - sus Pass-in' by — Oh
swing low sweet Char - i - ot — Swing low. Swing low in nuh
Eas' swing low swing low in nuh Eas' swing low, swing low char-
- i - ot swing low, — swing low — char - i - ot swing low.

533
539

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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567 haps it is true that certain plantation owners were of a superior type and provided a
156 superior example; or was it that the education received by the slaves was better suited to their needs?

•533 I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
539 by mysel'
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
When my Lord call me I must go

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to weep like a willo' moan like a dove

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
When my Lord call me I must go

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
When my Lord calls me I must go

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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ZION

• 533 585 Most Negro weddings, in church or out, are conducted, I am told, without music; but when Ben Davis was married, this song was used with telling effect in the Frederica African Baptist Church. Two ushers walked from the altar with lighted lamps in their hands, and met the bridal party at the door. Two little girls headed the procession and strewed flowers in its path. Ben, with the maid of honor, was followed by the bride on the arm of the best man. To the music of "O Zion—when the bridegroom comes," sung by the guests who filled the church, the participants moved to the altar, where the ushers put down their lamps, and Joe Lowman, the preacher, was waiting for them. When Lowman asked Ben: "Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife?" Ben spoke up "good and strong": "Yes suh!" When the same question was asked of Norah, her answer was very weak. This did not satisfy the parson: "Answer as though you mean it. This ain't for today and tomorrow, this is a lifetime business!" Everybody laughed. Lowman, after the usual procedure, offered a prayer and ended the ceremony by telling Ben to "salute the bride."

533 (461) Besides being used in church and at praise meeting, I find "Zion" was one of the favorite rowing songs of the Butler oarsmen. Tall, lean Liverpool, who looks like an Arab sheik, showed us how he rowed to its rhythm:

533
539
585

Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come
Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come.

Chorus: O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
When the bridegroom come.

Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come
Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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● 533 Keep your lamp trimmed and burnin'
539 When the bridegroom come
585 Keep your lamp trimmed and burnin'
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

Five were wise an' five were foolish
When the bridegroom come
Five were wise an' five were foolish
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

What did the foolish say to the wise
When the bridegroom come
What did the foolish say to the wise
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

Lend us some of your oil
When the bridegroom come
Lend us some of your oil
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

We will enter into the marriage
When the bridegroom come
We will enter into the marriage
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

We will all go out to meet them
When the bridegroom come
We will all go out to meet them
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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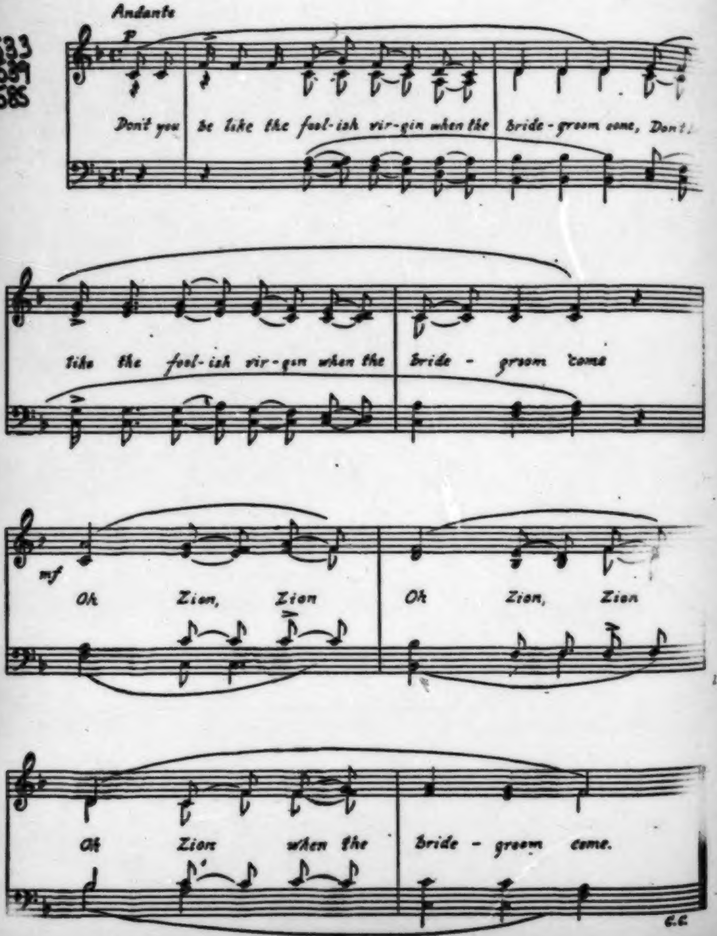
St. Simon's Island

36. ZION

•533
539
585


Andante
p
Don't you be like the fool-ish vir-gin when the bride-groom come, Don't
like the fool-ish vir-gin when the bride - groom come
mf
Oh Zion, Zion Oh Zion, Zion
Oh Zion when the bride - groom come.
C.C.

[p.160]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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MY GOD IS A ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

• 533
537
776

This song belongs to the exhorting-sermon type which has an African counterpart. The old-time preacher rhythmically chanted his sermon; at effective intervals he broke into song, in which he was joined by the congregation.

533
539

Chorus: My God is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
My God is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop let me tell you 'bout the Chapter One
When the Lord God's work has jus' begun
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Two
When the Lord God's written his Bible through
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Three
When the Lord God died on Calvary.

Chorus: An' Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Four
Lord God visit 'mong the po'
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Five
Lord God brought the dead alive
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Six
He went in Jerusalem and healed the sick.

(repeat chorus)

Stop and let me tell you 'bout Chapter Seven
Died and risen and went to Heaven
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Eight
John seen Him standin' at the Golden Gate
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Nine
Lord God turned the water to wine
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Ten
John says He's comin' in the world again.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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37. MY GOD IS A ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

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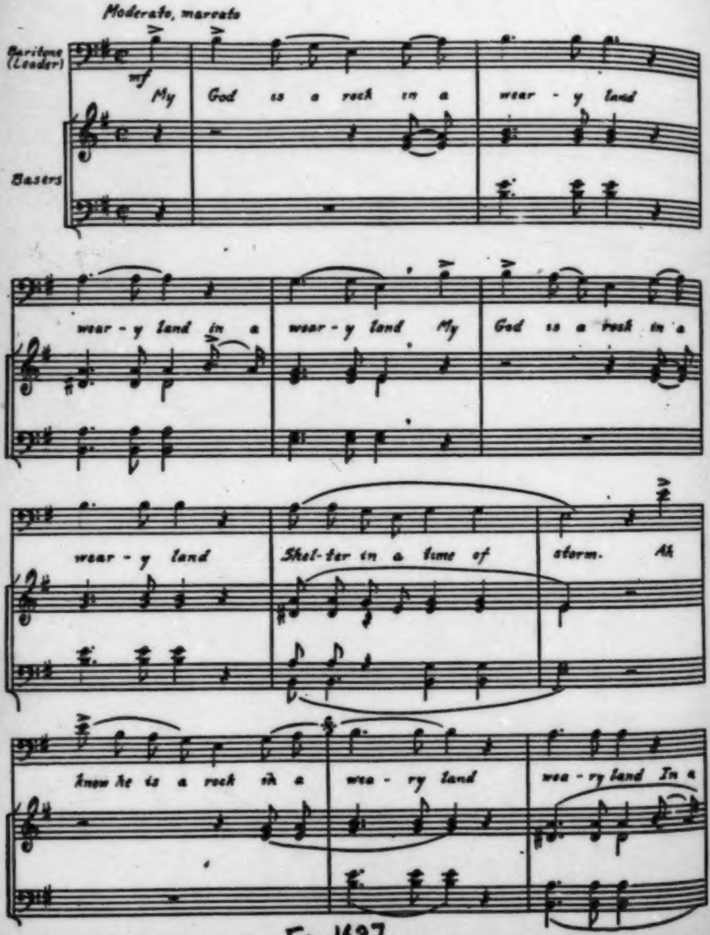
Moderato, marcato
Baritone (Leader)
Basses
mf
My God is a rock in a weary land
weary land in a weary land My God is a rock in a
weary land Shelter in a time of storm. Ah
know he is a rock in a weary land weary land In a

[p. 162]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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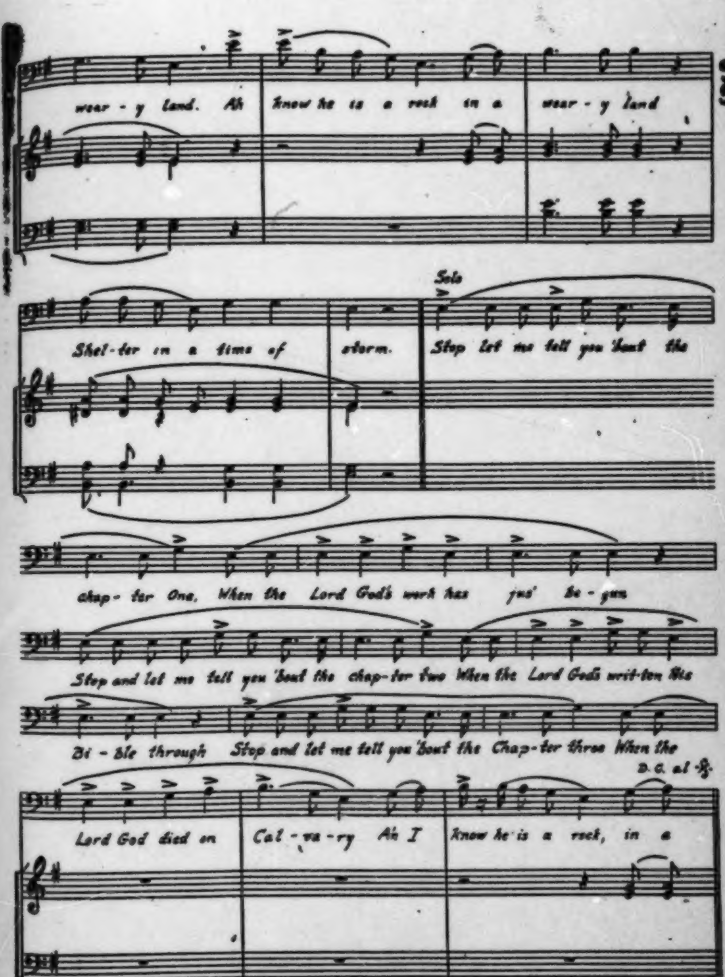
533
537


wear - y land. Ah know he is a rock in a wear - y land
Shel-ter in a time of storm.
Solo
Stop let me tell you 'bout the
chap-ter One, When the Lord God's work has jus' Be-gun
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the chap-ter two When the Lord God's writ-ten His
Bi-ble through Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chap-ter three When the
D.C. al 𝄋
Lord God died on Cal-va-ry Ah I know he is a rock, in a

C.C.

[p. 163]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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THE BELL DONE RING

533 171 In a collection of African Music recorded by Laura C. Boulton a war song[10] is given from the Tuareg tribe of the French Sudan, near Timbuctoo, which is strikingly similar to a sermon song of Henry Shaw's, even to the peculiar reedy quality of tone.[11] The Tuareg singer recites the brave deeds of a chief; Henry recounts the adventures of Jonah.

533 126 It has been practically impossible to take down Henry's song as he sings it. When he recites it, he gives an entirely different version. If I ask the meaning of a line, he has to begin all over again—and we never get very far.

533 539 Chorus: Live humble, humble, humble your soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble little chil'run
The bell done ring.
Live humble little soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble I say
The bell done ring.

"Live humble" is sung three more times with the response, "The bell done ring," following each line, and the chorus ends with its first four lines. The gist of the narrative section follows the story of Jonah's tribulations quite literally.

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[10] *Vol. I, record 86-A.*

(567) [11] *Our coastal Negroes appear to be musically more closely allied to the Tuaregs than to any other African tribe of whose songs I have been able to secure records. Record 86-B of the same series gives a lullaby sung by a Tuareg woman which—except for the difference in language—might be sung by a grandmother anywhere along this coast. If we knew the period in which certain groups of slaves came to America, and the section of Africa from which they were obtained, we might learn more about their musical background. Two records made by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition in the Belgian Congo indicate that the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia might have come from that region, since their ring-shouts show a similarity to Nos. 6 and 10 in tone, rhythm, and hand clapping. The "sharp exhalation of breath" heard in No. 10 is also demonstrated by some of our ex-slaves, but they do no "stomping," although on two or three occasions I have seen Negroes from the interior do it.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533 Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
539 To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

123 Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle"
796 far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a
roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit.
346 The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy
352 ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact
that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh: His earnestness
796 and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude
786 with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who
became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No
He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

53 See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

BAPTISM

795 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of
•533 the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing
what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song,
sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile
795 away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and
794 other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were
dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn
[793] dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers,
with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers
who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone
he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not
prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to
go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a
boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same
thing at all.

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the Afri-
[782] can manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his
staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

---

[12] *Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them
[794] some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to
[577] the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't
want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas.
This ain' no time for it."*

[13] *In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are
[114] baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in
[196] this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use
of words make curious mistakes.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island

● 533
539

WADE IN NUH WATUH CHILDUN

Chorus: Wade in nuh watuh childun
Wade in nuh watuh childun
Wade in nuh watuh
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

If a you don' believe Ah been redeem'
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh
Follow me down to Jurdun stream
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

Repeat Chorus:

Who dat yonduh drest in white
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh
Mus' be the childun uv the Isralite
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

Repeat Chorus:

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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Georgia
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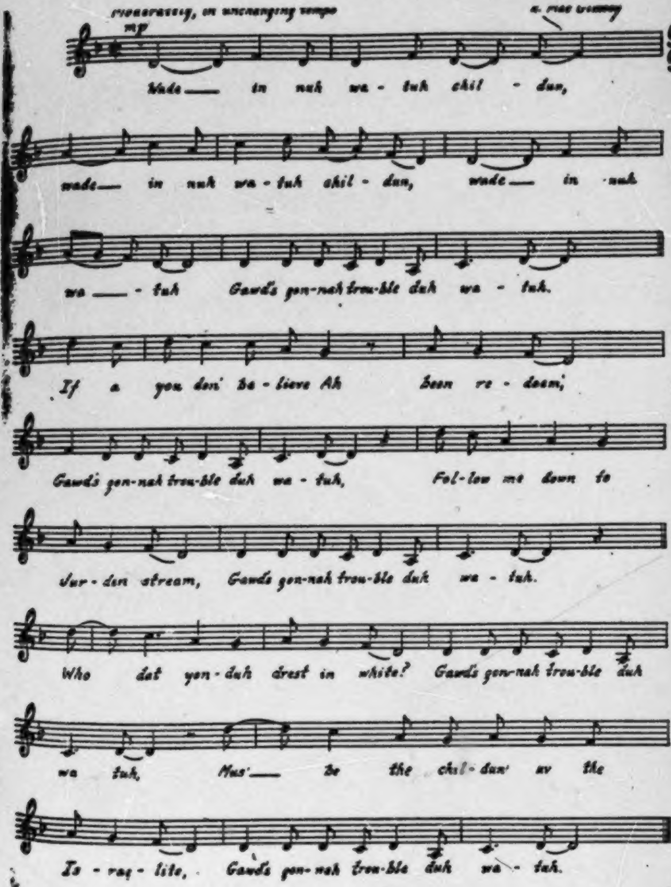
Moderately, in unchanging tempo
mp
Wade — in nuh wa - tuh chil - dun,
wade — in nuh wa - tuh chil - dun, wade — in nuh
wa — - tuh Gawd's gon-nah trou-ble duh wa - tuh.
If a you don' be - lieve Ah been re - deem;
Gawd's gon-nah trou-ble duh wa - tuh, Fol-low me down to
Jur - den stream, Gawds gon-nah trou-ble duh wa - tuh.
Who dat yon - duh drest in white? Gawd's gon-nah trou-ble duh
wa tuh, Mus' — be the chil - dun' uv the
Is - rae - lite, Gawd's gon-nah trou-ble duh wa - tuh.

533
551

[p. 171]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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• 533
589

SABBATH HAS NO END

In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
Sabbath has no end.
I went down to the River uv Jurdun
Water caught me to my throat
Jesus Christ was the Captain
An' the Holy Ghos' was my boat.
I'm goin' cross Jurd'n
I believe
I'm goin' cross Jurdun
I believe
I'm goin' cross Jurdun
I believe
Sabbath has no end.
I went down to the River uv Jurdun
Where John baptize three
Up step ole big man Satan say
John baptize me.
Look in the Book of Redemption
There you shall fine
Where Jesus Christ was the doctor
Turned the water to wine.
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Sabbath has no end.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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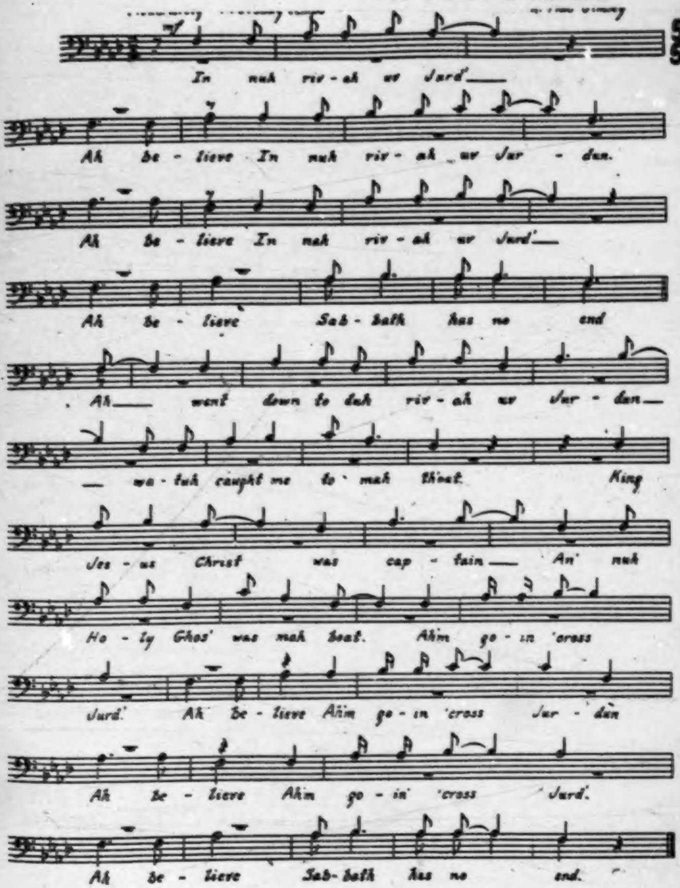
533
531


In nuh riv - ah ur Jurd'___
Ah be - lieve In nuh riv - ah ur Jur - dun.
Ah be - lieve In nuh riv - ah ur Jurd'___
Ah be - lieve Sab - bath has no end
Ah___ went down to duh riv - ah ur Jur - dun___
___ wa - tuh caught me to mah thoat. King
Jes - us Christ was cap - tain___ An' nuh
Ho - ly Ghos' was mah boat. Ahm go - in 'cross
Jurd.' Ah be - lieve Ahm go - in 'cross Jur - dun
Ah be - lieve Ahm go - in' 'cross Jurd'.
Ah be - lieve Sab - bath has no end.

[p. 173]

763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

789 763 775 In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[16] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

763 171 On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

IN THAT OLD FIELD

• 533 567 [764] Susyanna (Illustration 29),A learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

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[16] *As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 183.*

A, [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island

771 Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know
772 that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the phys-
171 ical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which pro-
duce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in
533 their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers
771 was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found
[154] release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like
a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Ne-
[171] groes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without num-
ber, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this
533 song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put
787 themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

533 Throw me any way
539 In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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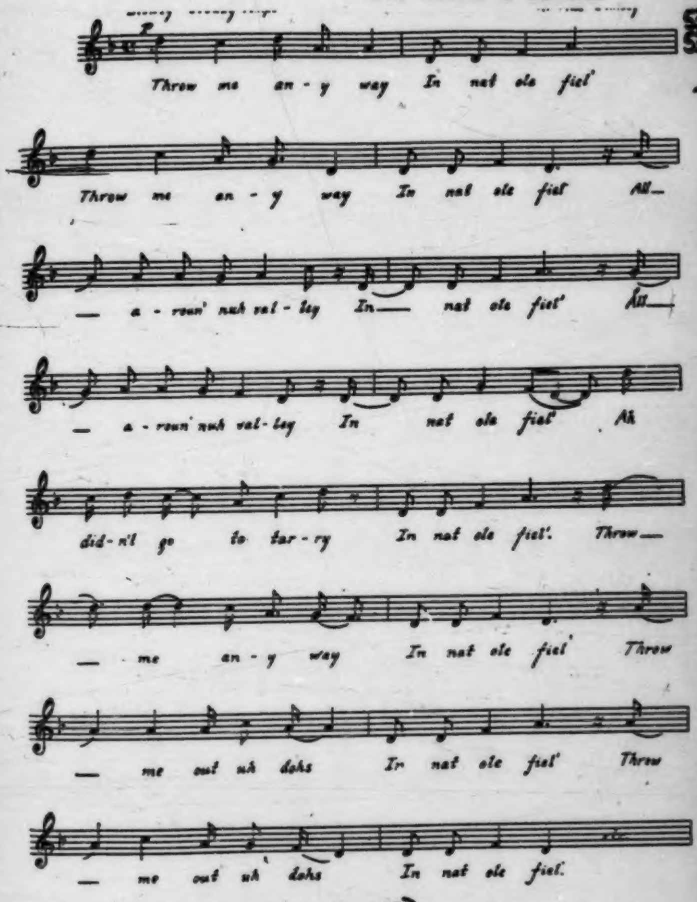
531


Throw me an - y way In nat ole fiel'
Throw me an - y way In nat ole fiel All—
— a - roun' nuh val - ley In— nat ole fiel' All—
— a - roun' nuh val - ley In nat ole fiel . Ah
did - n't go to tar - ry In nat ole fiel'. Throw—
— me an - y way In nat ole fiel' Throw
— me out uh dohs In nat ole fiel' Throw
— me out uh dohs In nat ole fiel.

[p. 177]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

JESUS GON TUH MAKE UP MY DYIN' BED

533
767
Although this song was brought to St. Simon's after the War Between the States, I am told by an old resident of McIntosh County that it originated in antebellum days when there were no colored undertakers, and a certain Negro was appointed on each plantation to make the dead ready for burial.

533
539

Chorus: He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well
He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well, well
He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well
Jesus gon tuh make up my dyin' bed.
Well, in my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's gon tuh cry
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to close my dyin' eye.

(repeat chorus)

In my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's goin' to weep
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to fol' my dyin' sheet.

(repeat chorus)

In my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's goin' to moan
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to hear my dyin' groan.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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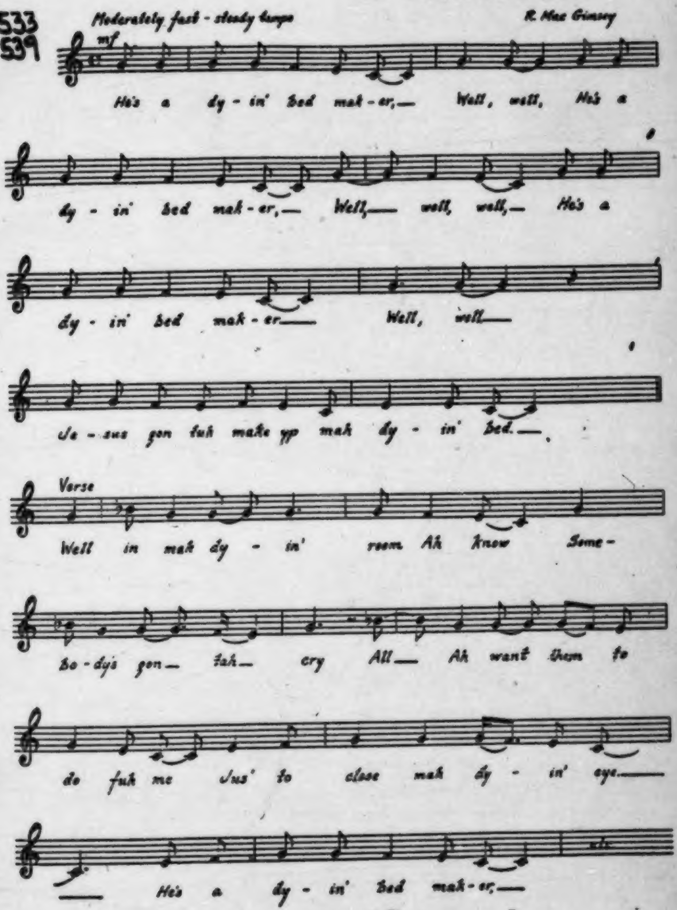
●533
539


Moderately fast - steady tempo
R. Mac Ginsey
mf
He's a dy - in' bed mak - er, — Well, well, He's a
dy - in' bed mak - er, — Well, — well, well, — He's a
dy - in' bed mak - er — Well, well —
Je - sus gon fuh make up mah dy - in' bed. —
Verse
Well in mah dy - in' room Ah know Some -
bo - dy's gon — tah — cry All — Ah want them to
do fuh me Jus' to close mah dy - in' eye. —
— He's a dy - in' bed mak - er, —
etc.

[p. 179]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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O DE ROBE

● 533 177 The Irish ditch-diggers, employed in repairing the banks enclosing the rice fields of Glynn County, probably account for the Celtic lilt in this tune.[17] The Negroes have always been great borrowers, musically speaking, but, to my mind, that matters little when they make the material so completely their own that the result is entirely different, and often an improvement on the original. This was clearly the case with the ante-bellum melodies of the white plantation owners. A race which could turn dreary book hymns into living creations deserves great applause, and the less said about the source of its inspiration the better—unless from a desire to call attention to its superior musical gift.

533 539

Chorus: O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now
O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now.

My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now
My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now
Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now
Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Joe contributes additional verses:

You get in trouble
De robe all ready now
Write to my Jesus
De robe all ready now.

Write to my Jesus t' sen' another angel
De robe all ready now
Send another angel t' trouble the water
De robe all ready now.

---

[464] [567] [17] *In 1838–39 it was found that the work of digging the canal connecting Brunswick with the Altamaha River—opened its length but never used—was too heavy for the majority of the cotton-field Negroes. Only about two hundred of the original five hundred were retained, and a large number of Irishmen were brought in. From such a contact it can be seen how the word "wake" came to be substituted for "settin'-up," since the two customs—except for the drinking—are quite similar.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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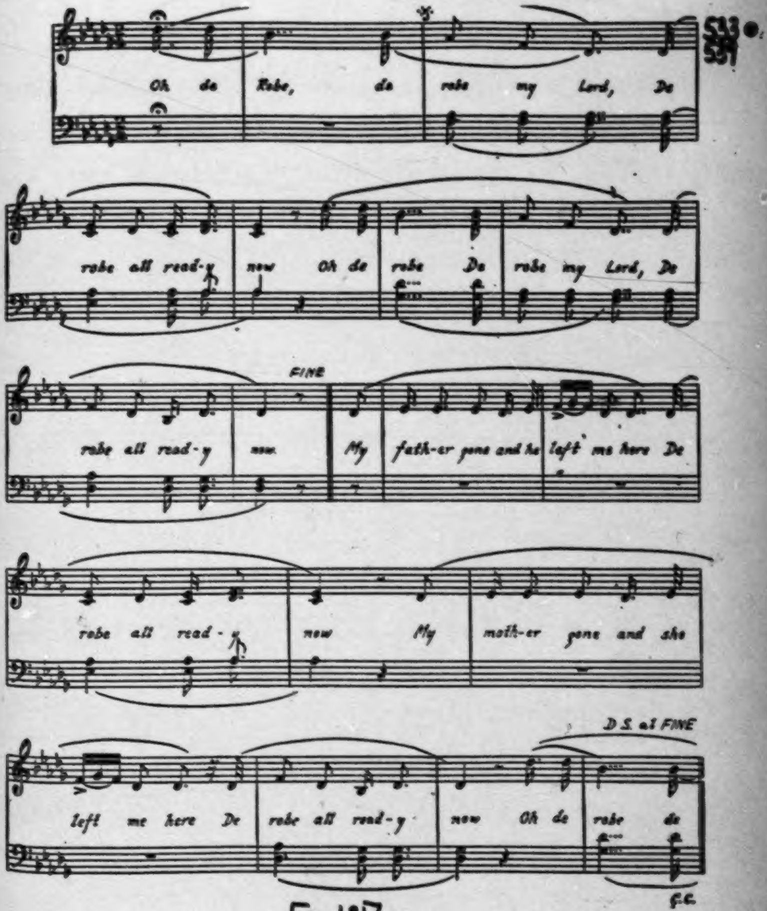
533
531
Oh de Robe, de robe my Lord, De
robe all read-y now Oh de robe De robe my Lord, De
FINE
robe all read-y now My fath-er gone and he left me here De
robe all read-y now My moth-er gone and she
D.S. al FINE
left me here De robe all read-y now Oh de robe de
G.C.

[p. 181]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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● 533
539

AYE LORD, TIME IS DRAWIN' NIGH

Good-bye Mother
Hmmh [19]
I'm goin' to leave you
Hmmh
For you can't go with me
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

In the city of Jerusalem
Hmmh
An' Pentecos' Day
Hmmh
When the people got the Holy Ghost
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

Good-bye tattlers
Hmmh
Goin' away to leave you
Hmmh
You can't go with me
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

---

[19] *Sung by the basses with closed lips. This odd nasal tone adds attractive variety to a fine piece of melodic construction.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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44. AYE LORD, TIME IS DRAWIN' NIGH

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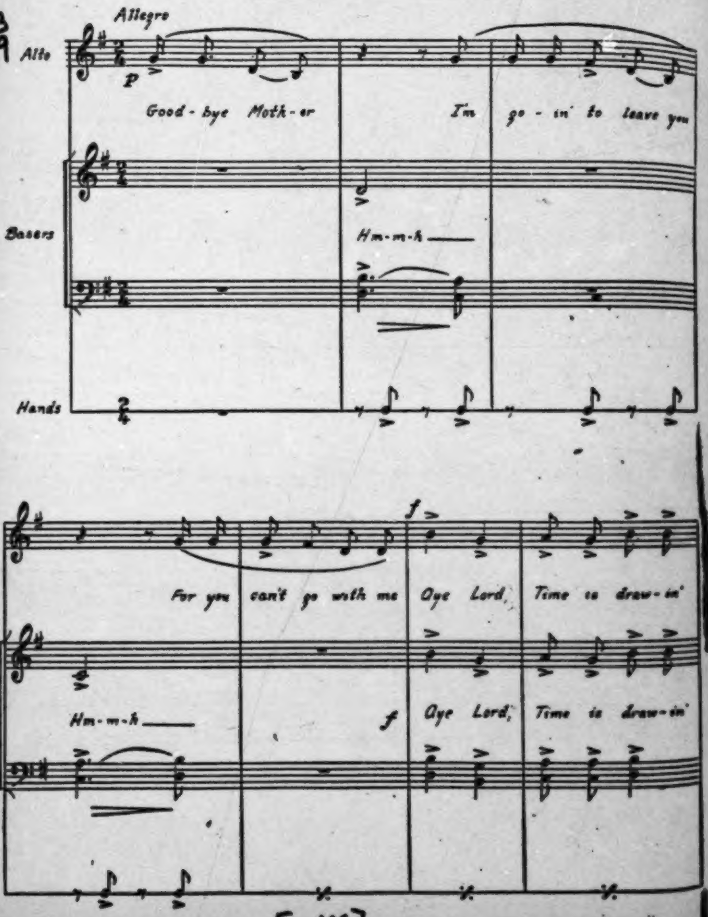
539


Allegro
Alto
p
Good-bye Moth-er I'm go-in' to leave you
For you can't go with me
f
Aye Lord, Time is draw-in'
Basses
Hm-m-h
Hm-m-h
f
Aye Lord, Time is draw-in'
Hands
2/4

[p. 186]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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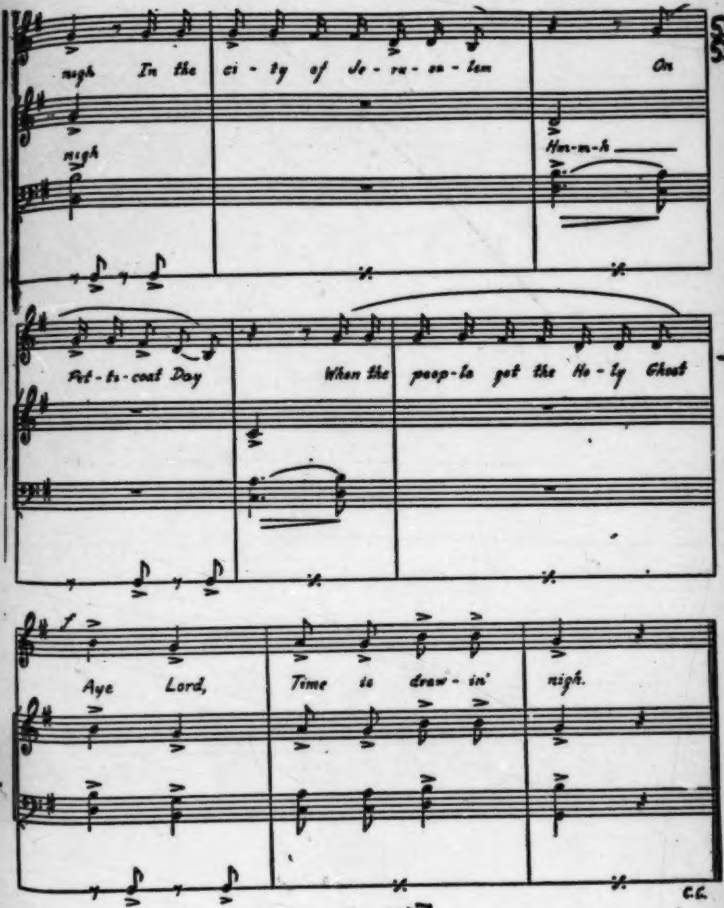
nigh In the city of Je-ru-sa-lem On
nigh
Hm-m-h
Pet-ti-coat Day
When the peop-le got the Ho-ly Ghost
f
Aye Lord, Time is draw-in' nigh.
C.G.

533
539

[p. 187]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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● 533 539 It was interesting to find the tune of this song fitted out in M[illegible] with an entirely different set of words. None but a Negro poet coul[illegible] [illegible] the imagery of the following lines:

Loose horse in the valley
Aye
Who goin' t' ride 'im
Aye
Nothin' but the righteous
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

Judgment's a comin'
Aye
How you know it
Aye
By the buddin' of the fig tree
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

Don't you hear God talkin'
Aye
He's a talkin' through the thunder
Aye
Then people ona wonder
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

NUMMER ME ONE

Chorus: Nummer[20] me one
Nummer me one
Nummer me one
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

Sen' for my leader here
Sen' for my leader here
Sen' for my leader here
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

Sen' for my preacher here
Sen' for my preacher here
Sen' for my preacher here
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

The song is prolonged by sending for the different [illegible]ily.

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[20] Number.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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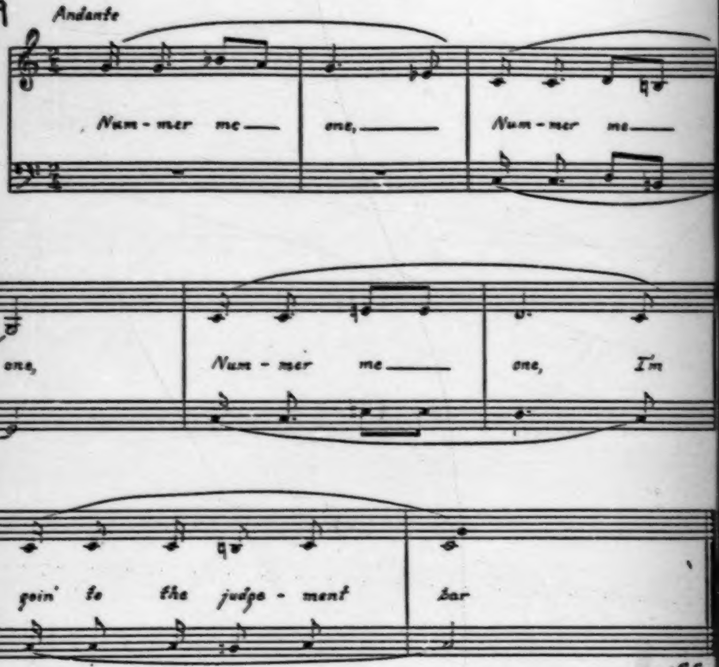
● 533
539

45. NUMMER ME ONE



Andante
Num - mer me one,
Num - mer me one,
Num - mer me one, I'm
goin' to the judge - ment bar
C.C.

[p. 189]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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FOR I AIN' GOIN' T' DIE NO MO'

533 The rhythm and tune of this "settin'-up" song suggest an old English ballad.
764 As can be seen, there is nothing religious about the ironic observation in the
first two lines. Julia, who taught me the song, laughingly said: "It's true all right.
(574) Mighty few visit the sick, but hundreds go to the wake and the buryin'."

(539)
When I'm on my sick bed—nobody visit me
But now I'm goin' to the graveyard—everybody follow me.
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.

159 Janey Jackson, (Illustration 33),[A] one of the most picturesque characters of
567 Brunswick sang an additional verse of the same song. Janey was born on St. Simon's, in "Nigger House Field" at Kelvin Grove, in 1826. At the age of twelve she was sold by the Caters, with her parents,[21] two sisters and a brother, to Mr. Henry duBignon of Jekyl Island. She told me her family came over to St. Simon's frequently to see friends and relatives, as it was only a short row at low tide before the channel was deepened. Janey described the Caters' Old Dembo, Neptun' Small, father of Clarence and Cornelia, and Adam Proctor, father of Julia and Willis. No
(533) doubt it was on St. Simon's that she learned this verse:

(539)
When I bin in de worl' bin a sin—nobody had nothin' to say
But now I come into de House of God—everybody got somethin' to say.
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day.

Under the influence of the duBignons, from whom she also learned to speak French, Janey became a Catholic; and when she went to live in Brunswick, she

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[21] *Janey's father, Jack, was an African prince, but her mother was "country born" (born in America).*

A, [For Illustration 33, see Category 142, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

"BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
(492) calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on
(493) a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
(562) file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

(481) When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
(793) not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months. In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

---

(231) [22] *After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty*
(136) *of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.*

[23] *It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile—than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.*

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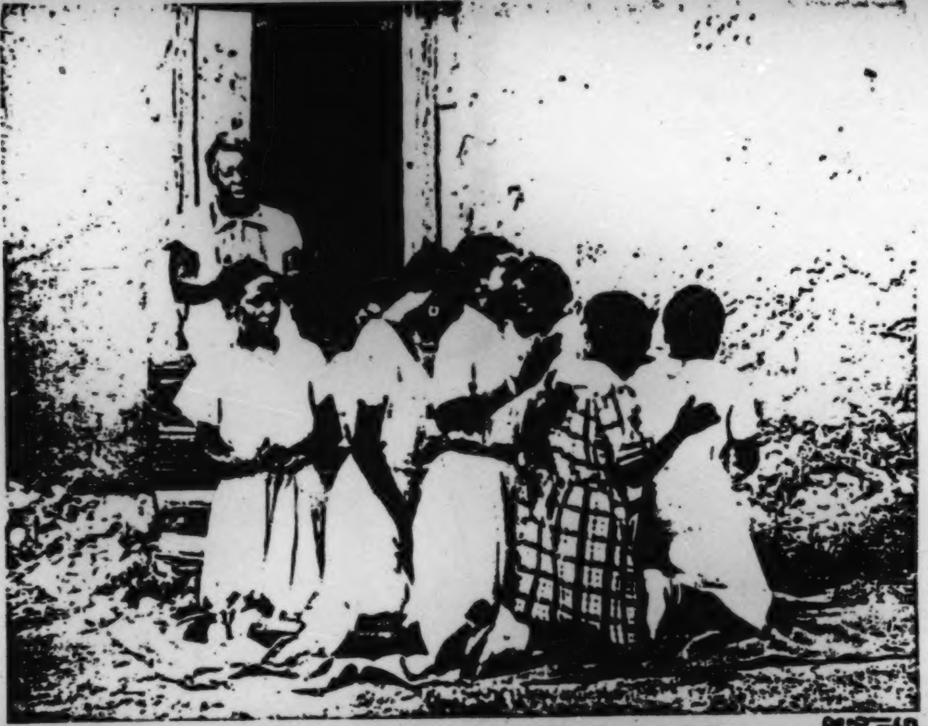
St. Simon's Island

[Facing p. 192]



30. Julia Teaching the St Simon's Children: "Emma You My Darlin'"

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

IN SOME LONESOME GRAVEYARD

•533 In Charleston, where I was so ill-advised as to ask a member of the white Society for the Preservation of Spirituals why this work was not done by the Negroes, I was tartly told that they no longer sang the old songs. In spite of that statement, when a friend called her cook into the dining room, and summoned an old flower woman from the street, I heard the two sing songs which were perfectly familiar.

I asked for "In Some Lonesome Graveyard." They tittered and said: "You know dat one? Dat's real ole." After singing three verses, the cook, with an instinct for a dramatic exit, threw her apron over her head, and retreated sobbing to the kitchen. She probably remembered she had something in the oven that required her attention.

533 539 Willis tells me he learned the song as a small boy from his father, Adam Proctor, while planting corn.

U-m-h, u-m-h,[38] I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
In some lonesome graveyard.

Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
In some lonesome graveyard.

U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
In some lonesome graveyard.

Fathers are warned about their sons, preachers about their members.

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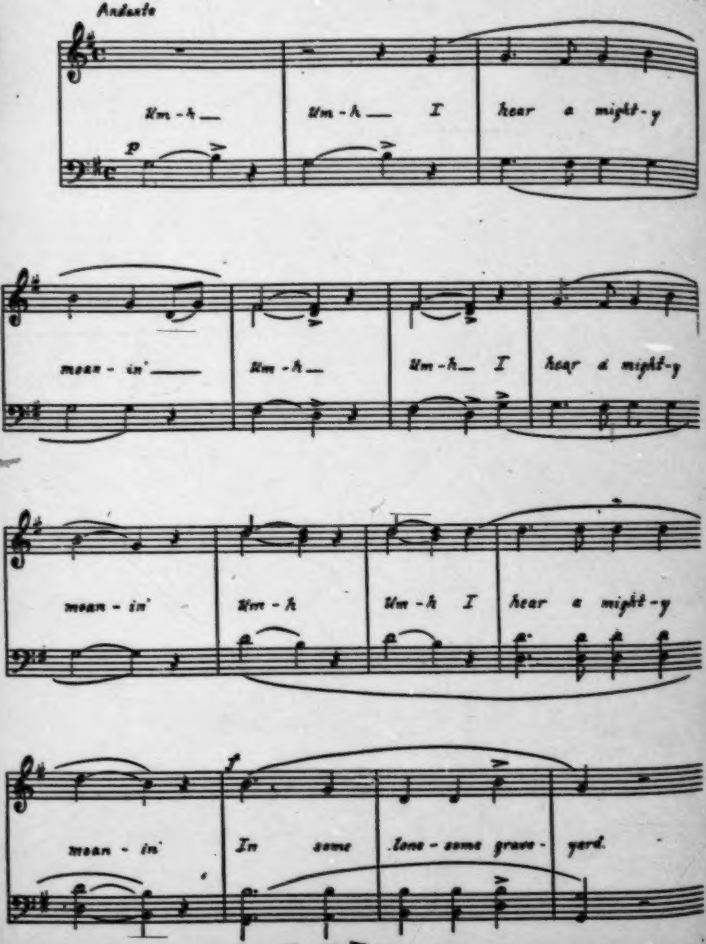
[38] Sung with the lips closed.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

46. IN SOME LONESOME GRAVEYARD

533
539


Andante
p
Um-h — Um-h — I hear a might-y
mean-in' — Um-h — Um-h — I hear a might-y
mean-in' Um-h Um-h I hear a might-y
mean-in' f In some lone-some grave-yard.

[p. 194]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

I GOT TO LAY IN YONDER GRAVEYARD

●533
539

It is a pity that the music of these touching lines is not available.

I got to lay in yonder graveyard
I got to lay there fo' myself
Nobody here can lay there fo' me
I got to lay there fo' myself.

I got to stan' my trial in the Judgment
I got to stan' there fo' myself
There's nobody here can stan' there fo' me
I got to stan' there fo' myself.

I got to give an account in the Judgment
I got to give it fo' myself
Nobody here can give it fo' me
I got to give it fo' myself.

I got to cross that river o' Jurden
I got to cross there fo' myself
Nobody here goin' to cross there fo' me
I got to cross there fo' myself.

I got to pray in that lonesome valley
I got to pray there fo' myself
Nobody here goin' to pray there fo' me
I got to pray there fo' myself.

I got to weep at Zion's Court House
I got to weep there fo' myself
My dear mother can't weep there fo' me
I got to weep there fo' myself.

CHAPTER SIX

Work Songs

In the old days, before Negroes rode to work in automobiles, they sang as they 533
walked, and most of their tasks were lightened with song. One of my pleasantest 198
memories is of hearing them singing in the early morning and at sundown, and– (461)
during the heat of the day–calling to each other across wide fields. The call was
peculiar, and I always wondered how they came by such a strange form of vocal
gymnastics, since I never heard a white person do anything like it. Years later I ran 533
across a description of the trick in Natalie Curtis-Burlin's *Songs and Tales from the* 198
Dark Continent. The author, in speaking of a Bantu rain song, calls attention to a 171
passage which contains "an upward break in the voice, something like a Swiss
yodel." Such field-calls are rarely heard today, although I am told they are still in
use in the vicinity of the Okefenokee Swamp.

In the late eighteen-eighties, the Negroes in my home neighborhood–southern 533
New Jersey–began to pattern their behavior after that of the silent white folk, and 171
from that time on, little of their singing was heard. Farther south, this racial characteristic
was later in disappearing. In 1901, Georgia Bryan Conrad tells us that,
in her youth, "the Negroes were always singing," but adds regretfully: "Nothing is
in greater contrast to that time than the quietness of the Negroes now." [1] However, 533
there are remote places where they still sing at work. In factories where large numbers 461
are employed in such monotonous jobs as shucking oysters or picking crabs and
shrimp, rhythmic songs are used to relieve dullness. They are also sung wherever
work is heavy, and concerted effort is required. In Brunswick, vessels are still loaded
to the musical chant of "Sandy Anna"; freight cars at the sugar terminal are shunted
for short distances to the rhythm of "Old Tar River," and the cabin in front of my
house was moved on rollers from Kelvin Grove to the significant tune of "Pay Me
My Money Down!"

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[1] "Reminiscences of a Southern Woman," Southern Workman, 1901.

000 as they hoisted and lowered the hogsheads and boxes of their cargoes; one man taking the burden of the song (and the slack of the rope) and the others striking in with the chorus. They would sing in this way more than a dozen different songs in an hour; most of which might indeed be warranted to contain "nothing religious"—a few of them, "on the contrary, quite the reverse"—but generally rather innocent and proper in their language, and strangely attractive in their music; and with a volume of voice that reached a square or two away. This plan of labor has now passed away, in Philadelphia at least, and the songs, I suppose, with it. So that these performances are to be heard only among black sailors on their vessels, or 'long-shore men in out-of-the-way places, where opportunities for respectable people to hear them are rather few.

Something of the African background of these "pure negro songs" may be gathered from a description of the work songs of West Africa, given by N. G. J. Ballanta, who tells us: "Music in Africa is not cultivated for its own sake. It is always used in connection with dances or to accompany workmen. The rhythmic interest of the songs impels them to work and takes away the feeling of drudgery." He goes on to say that work songs are "—mainly rhythmic—short phrases mostly of two or three bars; solo and chorus follow each other instantly; the chorus is in many instances composed of two or three ejaculatory words, answered by the workmen. Tempo moderate." This summary fits so many of the songs used by our stevedores that the connection is unmistakable.

The similarity between the songs of African workmen and those of their cousins in this country is also illustrated in some examples from the shipping docks of Beira, given by Natalie Curtis-Burlin. One of them, used by laborers in pushing or pulling heavy things, might have been sung on the docks of Brunswick. Another, like so many of the work songs of the American Negroes, was suggested by the particular job in hand, in this case, the literal translation runs: "Dawn—with freight—Yes, yes!—Dawn—with freight—Look for the label!"

533 461 Among the Negroes, any song with the proper rhythm is used to accompany whatever work requires its help. While those of a religious character have always been the greatest favorites in our section,[3] the type of work is necessarily the determining factor. It is unlikely that a shanty could be used for rowing, or a rowing song for beating rice. In the old days, if no suitable verse came to mind for a particular task, one was made up then and there out of slender material. Fanny Kemble,

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[3] *It is interesting to notice that the religious songs used by the stevedores and other workmen are vastly superior to those heard in church and prayer meeting. The reason is self-evident: the latter have been dressed up to conform to the white folks' fashion.*

● 533 in her *Journal*, gave several illustrations which show how anything was grist for the
421 Negroes' song-mill. With the rivers affording the only means of travel, it was natural
(487) that she should hear rowing songs of all kinds; and on one occasion she had the
unique privilege of hearing her own praises extemporaneously chanted by her two Negro boatmen. They described her personal attractions, and amused her intensely by their repeated references to her "wire waist."[4]

Today the Negroes are less inventive, and generally confine themselves to a substitution of names or familiar lines in the old songs, but we can still hear examples of the way they utilized incidents or phrases that struck their fancy. If a captain said: "It's rough going 'round the Horn," the Negroes made up a song about the statement, and we had: "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla gal, Go 'round the Horn!" "Ragged Leevy," a waterfront character of Brunswick, was described in the shanty that bears his name. "Little Johnny Brown, fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound," was so popular among the stevedores that he figured in one of their jolliest shanties; and "Yonder come that *Hessie*" always brings a regretful feeling to those of us who remember the "good old days" on St. Simon's when the *Hessie* was our means of communication with the outside world, and the captain obligingly did our errands.

In our machine age it is inevitable that these work songs should pass. Before they have entirely disappeared, records should be made of the few examples that have survived.

SHANTIES

If anyone needs more information about the use of these shanties, I suggest that he apply to either Joe Armstrong or Henry Merchant of St. Simon's Island. Both were at one time leaders of stevedore crews, and both have told me the uses to which the different songs were put. Since I am a land-lubber and more interested in music than in the mechanics of loading lumber and stowing cotton, details concern-
[126] ing the latter have not stuck, while the tunes have—to the last note. Any mistake in describing their application is mine, not Joe's or Henry's.

000 In the early days of the lumber industry, great rafts of logs were nailed together, and—with two or three men in charge—were drifted down the Altamaha to the mills at its mouth.[5] Ships from everywhere came for the sawed lumber. Julia once

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[4] *African explorers with more knowledge of the native dialect than their boatmen realized were often entertained in the same manner, but their defects—not their charms—were derisively enumerated.*

[5] *Fanny Kemble mentions in her Journal that on one of her boat-trips from Darien she saw "The river . . . covered with Ocone [river] boxes." She describes them as monstrous square*

told me she had seen as many as thirty-five vessels lined up at The Mills in the days 000 when the Hilton-Dodge Lumber Company was at the peak of its production. There was the *Waltham*, a three-masted schooner, under Captain Bartow—remembered as "the bad-luck ship." The *Annie Bishop* was also a three-masted schooner, the *Irene* was a brig, and there was one called the *Hope Sharewood* which brought forth many a pun. As many as twenty-five Negroes would "roll ballast"—which means, as can be imagined, that the stones with which the windjammers came loaded were landed at a temporary dock, and rolled in wheelbarrows to waste land. A geologist with a bit of curiosity might find it of interest to examine the contents of the small islands of ballast in the marsh between St. Simon's and Brunswick. They represent calling cards from all over the world. I have always wondered what the handsome white bark *Regina*, from Archangel—which I saw at The Mills in 1913—could have brought to these shores.

The *Waltham* probably came loaded with the New Engand granite that provided the owner of Hamilton Plantation with a rock garden in a rockless land. Some years ago chunks of flint from the chalk cliffs of England were plentiful on the banks of the river beside Fort Frederica, but Boy Scouts have no doubt found them useful —as my children did—for they are no longer abundant.

Floyd White and Henry Merchant, among others, have given me lively shan- 533● ties, and they both employ the old-fashioned falsetto tones which are so effective when heard in the open. It is a curious fact that most dark-colored men now appear to be baritones; yet a hundred years ago Fanny Kemble said that tenors predominated on St. Simon's.[6] I remember from my youth the high tones of the Negro

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boxes, "made out of rough planks put together in the roughest manner possible to attain the necessary object of keeping the cotton dry. Upon this great tray are piled . . . cotton bags, to the height of ten, twelve and fourteen feet. . . . These Ocone boxes are broken up at Darien, where the cotton is shipped either for the Savannah, Charleston, or Liverpool markets and the timber of which they are constructed, sold." This chance reference to the sale of timber indicates the beginning of the lumber industry.

[6] "The only exception that I have met with yet among our boat voices to the high tenor which they seem all to possess is in the person of an individual named Isaac, a basso profundo of the deepest dye." The situation she describes holds to this day. We have only one true bass on the island, but he does not appear to enjoy hearing his voice as we do. I cannot get him to use it, although I try every means—praise, bribery, and the opposite tack are all of no avail. A pity; singing in unison needs the substance given by such a voice, as well as the variety provided by the interpolations of the "high tribble" and tenor. It was interesting to find in Northern Haiti that our yard boy would sing a verse in a high falsetto; the next would be in his natural baritone—from which I gathered that such a procedure might be traditional.

533 men, and the odd break on the top note before the singer suddenly dropped a
whole octave. These must have been conventions, for since 1890 I have not heard
533 anybody except these two men use them. Floyd sings "Free at Last" with all the
505 ancient frills, and tells me the tune was used for "blockin' timber." Joe mentions
461 such technical lumber-loading terms as "wing-tier," which probably means just what
the word implies, and "kelson knees," which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "a line of timber placed inside a ship along the floor timbers and parallel with the keel." The "beam-dog" is, I gather, a grappling-iron with a fang which clutches the log or piece of timber to be handled. "Block and tickle" means a system of pulleys by which this work was done. Joe learned such work as "narrow trunkin' "—stowing lumber in a peculiar way—from colored men who had been taught by Irish stevedores. The head stevedore was a white man who contracted to load a vessel for so much per thousand feet. Big ships employed four colored stevedores called "headers," [7] and used derricks; schooners needed only three headers—one outside and two inside. Short lumber went into the hatch, but for long lumber you had to "knock out the port," which was generally in the bow. In stowing cotton, the bale, as far as I could figure out, was lowered into the hold in a sling with three hooks attached, something like an ice-hook with an extra prong. Then it was rammed tightly into place by what "Cap'n" Joe [8] (Illustration 31)A calls a "snilo"—a post against which the cotton jack was placed. "Pullin' lumber" meant shoving it on a long greased skid, waist high, made up of a series of carpenter's horses. There were generally four men at one end, and the same number at the other.

533
461 There are many shanties of which only fragments remain. One about the menu of the captain indicates, as Miss Colcord tells us, that it might have originated on a slave ship in tropical waters:

[539]

What do you think he had for dinner?
Monkey soup an' gray molasses.
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Floyd says it was used to "hist the gaff when the cap'n was ready to go to sea." He remembers another fragment which runs like this: "Clear the track an' let the bullgine back," and another:

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[7] *The "headers" were the stevedores responsible for the proper loading of a vessel.*

[567] [8] *In plantation days the most important Negro slave was the "driver." His distasteful task was to see that the orders of the white overseer were carried out. As can be imagined the very name "driver" was unpopular, and after emancipation the Negro who had charge of a gang of laborers was called "Cap'n," and the old term is no longer heard.*

A,[For Illustration 31, see Category 142, plate facing p. 183--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

•533
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O bring me a 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'.
A ring-tail' 'ator
O gal when you come off the islan'
A Darien 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'

Let us hope that more of these rollicking songs can be retrieved. They have a flavor that is unique.

CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY

(461)
(505)

This song was used in loading lumber, when six men on each side of the rope hauled on the block and tackle in putting a great "stick"[*] in place on board a vessel.

Call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
You call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
Yes, I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
O we'll heave an' haul together
O hang boys hang.
We heave an' haul forever
O hang boys hang.
They hang my ole Grandaddy
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
O they hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
O I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.

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[*] *This is Joe's way of referring to a piece of timber 16" x 16", and 40' long.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

47. CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY

● 533
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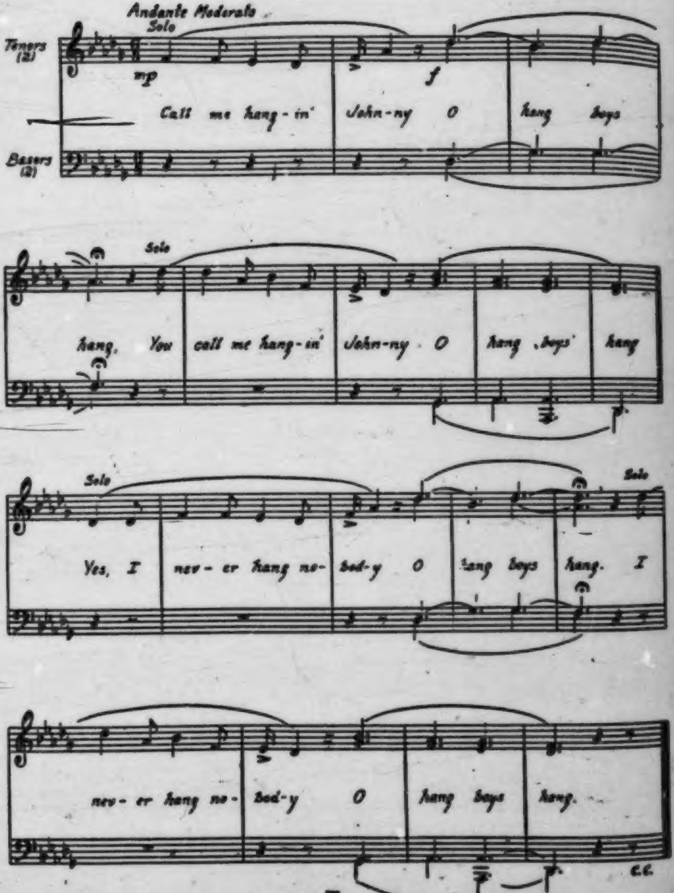
Andante Moderato
Solo
Tenors (2)
Basses (2)
mp
f
Call me hang-in' John-ny O hang boys
hang. You call me hang-in' John-ny O hang, boys' hang
Solo
Yes, I nev-er hang no-bod-y O hang boys hang. I
nev-er hang no-bod-y O hang boys hang.
C.C.

[p. 204]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN2
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

48. KNOCK A MAN DOWN

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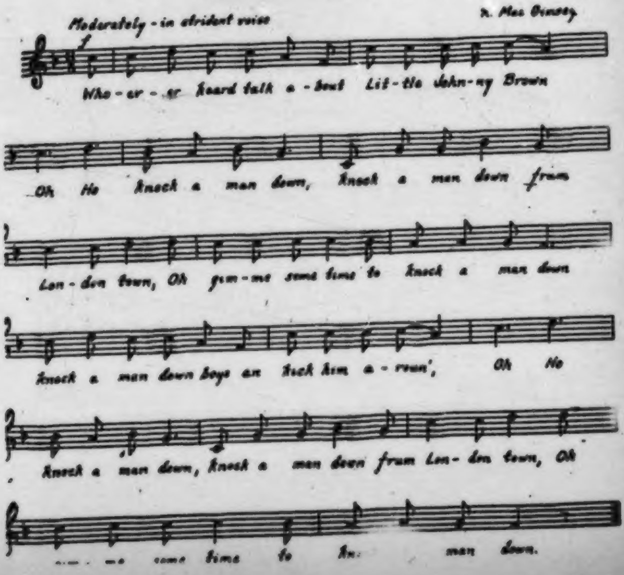
[505]

Johnny Brown was captain of a tugboat called *The Dandy*, which towed to open water the sailing vessels coming to Doboy Sound for lumber. The stevedores agreed he was "the fines' cap'n of 'em all."

Whoever heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Knock a man down bullies an' kick him aroun'
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Y'u ever heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.


Moderately - in strident voice
R. Mac Gimsey
Who - ev - er heard talk a - bout Lit - tle John - ny Brown
Oh Ho Knock a man down, Knock a man down from
Lon - don town, Oh gim - me some time to Knock a man down
Knock a man down Boys an kick him a - roun', Oh Ho
Knock a man down, Knock a man down from Lon - don town, Oh
gim - me some time to kn. man down.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

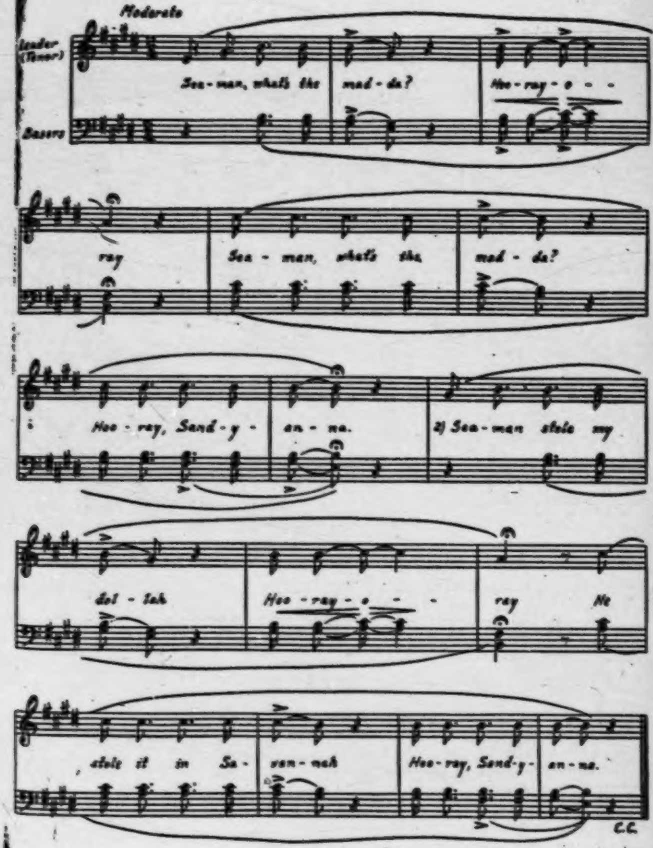
SANDY ANNA

● 533
539

Seaman, what's the madda?
Hoo-ray 'o-ray
Seaman, what's the madda?
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
Seaman stole my dolla'
Hooray 'o-ray
He stole it in Savannah
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
He spend it in Havana
Hooray 'o-ray
I caught 'im in his colla'
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
I shake 'im till he holla'
Hooray o'-ray
Seaman stole my dolla'
Hooray, Sandy Anna.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

49. SANDY ANNA


Moderato
Leader (Tenor)
Basses
Sea-man, what's the mad-da? Hoo-ray-o - - - ray
Sea-man, what's the mad-da? Hoo-ray, Sand-y-an-na.
2) Sea-man stole my dol-lah Hoo-ray-o - - ray
He, stole it in Sa-van-nah Hoo-ray, Sand-y-an-na.
C.C.

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[p.209]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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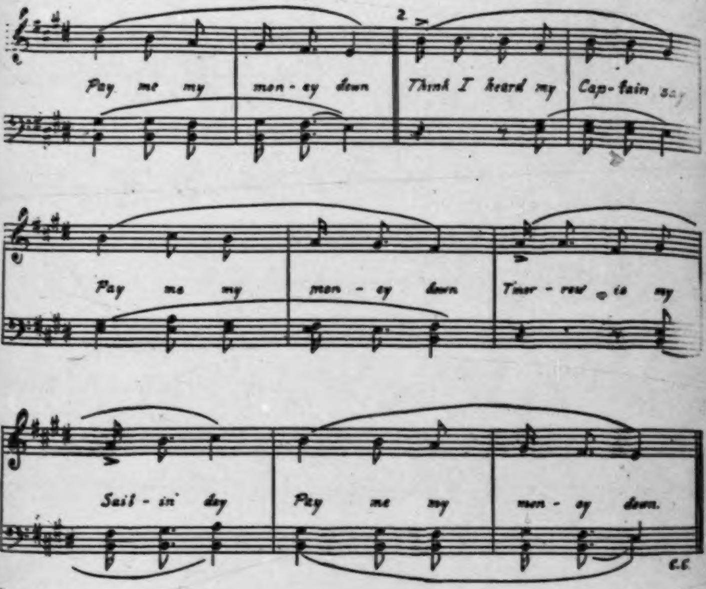
2
Pay me my money down
Think I heard my Captain say
Pay me my money down
Tmor-row is my
Sail-in' day
Pay me my money down.
C.C.

533
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DEBT I OWE

Debt I owe, Lord, debt I owe
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Debt I owe, Lord, debt I owe
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Debt I owe in Brunswick sto'e[11]
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
O Mister Watchman don't watch me
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Watch that nig'ah right behine that tree
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe.

[11] To sustain interest the shanty leader always introduced an element of surprise into his lines. To this day we *feel* cheated when *Floyd fails* to include "Jewtown Sto'e" and "St. *Simon's Sto'e*" when he sings about the debts he "ain' gonna pay," but then, that may be part of the game.

[p. 210]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

51. DEBT I OWE

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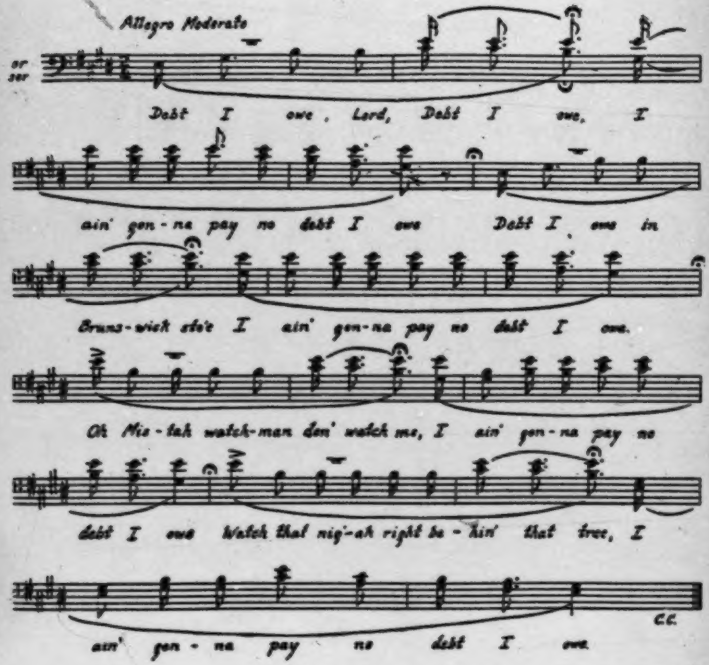
Allegro Moderato
or 8ve
Debt I owe, Lord, Debt I owe, I
ain' gon-na pay no debt I owe Debt I owe in
Bruns-wick sto'e I ain' gon-na pay no debt I owe.
Oh Mis-tah watch-man don' watch me, I ain' gon-na pay no
debt I owe Watch that nig-ah right be-hin' that tree, I
ain' gon-na pay no debt I owe.
C.C.

[p. 211]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

•533
539

RAGGED LEEVY

Ragged Leevy! Oh — Ho!
Do ragged Leevy
Ragged Leevy! O boy!
You ragged like a jay bird!
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Goin' to buil' me a sto'e fence[12]
In the mornin'—Oh — Ho!
Soon in the mornin'.
Hos' an' buggy—Oh — Ho!
Hos' an' buggy
Hos' an' buggy—O boy!
Dey's no one to drive 'um.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
In de mornin'
When I rise
I goin' to sit by de fire.
In de mornin' Oh — Ho!
O soon in de mornin'
In de mornin'
When I rise I goin' to sit by de fire.
Mauma Dinah Oh — Ho!
Do Mauma Dinah
Mauma Dinah
O gal I can't suppo't you.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Do Mr. Sipplin
Walkin' talkin'!
O buil' me a sto'e fence.
Sweet potato Oh — Ho!
Sweet potato
Sweet potato O boy
There's two in de fire.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Goin' to buil' me a sto'e fence
In de mornin' Oh — Ho!
When I rise I goin' to sit by de fire.

Used when "blockin' heavy timber."

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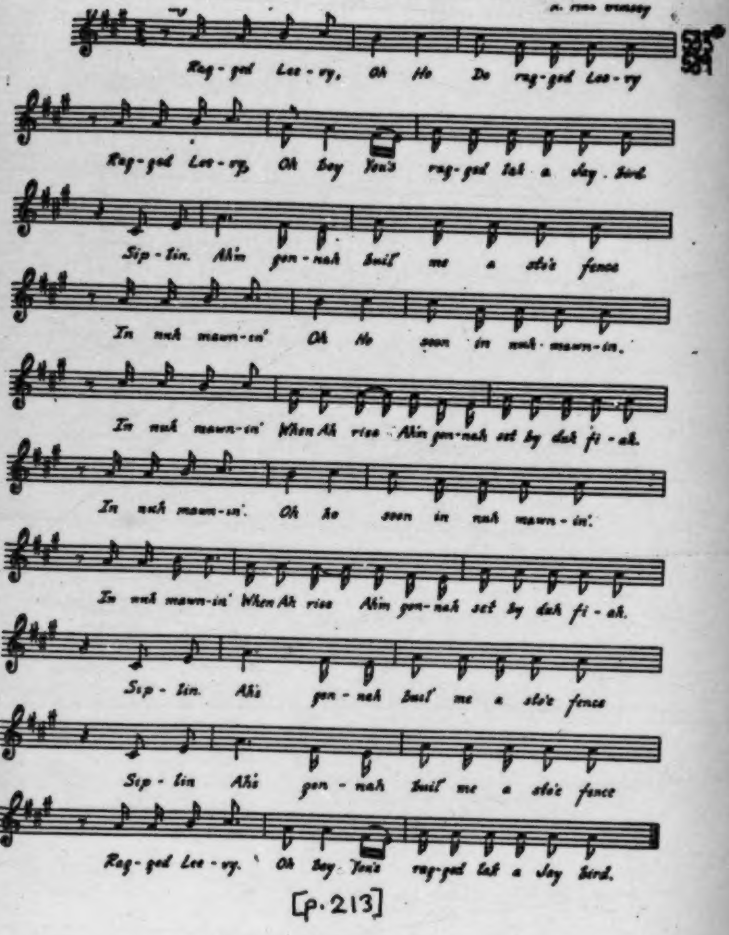
[12] Store fence.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island


Rag-ged Lee-vy, Oh Ho Do rag-ged Lee-vy
Rag-ged Lee-vy, Oh Say You's rag-ged lak a Jay-Bird
Sip-lin. Ah'm gon-nah buil' me a slo'e fence
In nuh mawn-in' Oh Ho soon in nuh mawn-in.
In nuh mawn-in' When Ah rise Ah'm gon-nah set by dah fi-ah.
In nuh mawn-in'. Oh ho soon in nuh mawn-in'.
In nuh mawn-in' When Ah rise Ah'm gon-nah set by dah fi-ah.
Sip-lin. Ah's gon-nah buil' me a slo'e fence
Sip-lin Ah's gon-nah buil' me a slo'e fance
Rag-ged Lee-vy. Oh Say You's rag-ged lak a Jay Bird.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

●533
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GOOD-BYE MY RILEY O

Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
Riley gone an' I'm goin' too
Goodbye my Riley O!
Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
Riley gone to Liverpool [13]
Good-bye my Riley O!
You Democrat Riley
O Riley, O man!
You Democrat Riley
Good-bye my Riley O!
Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
When I played that nine spot through
Good-bye my Riley O!

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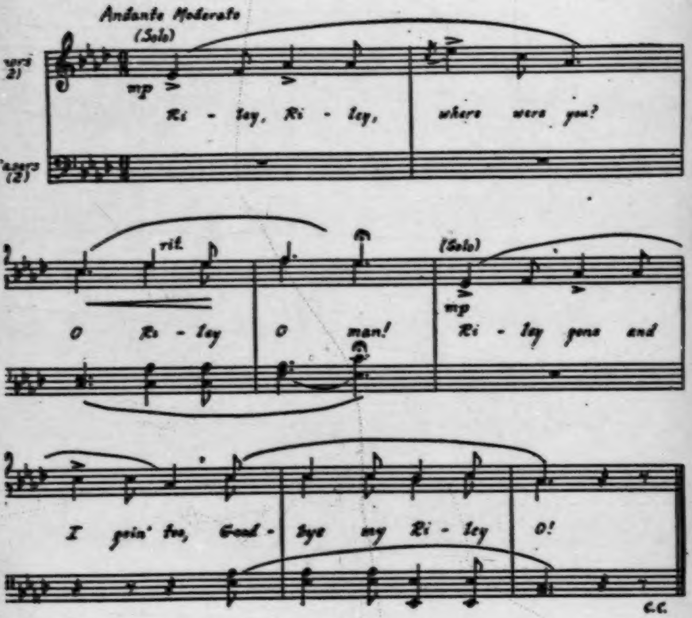
[13] London Town and Mobile Bay are the other spots where Riley is supposed to have gone.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533
539

53. GOOD-BYE MY RILEY O


Andante Moderato
(Solo)
mp
Ri - ley, Ri - ley, where were you?
rit.
O Ri - ley O man!
(Solo)
mp
Ri - ley gone and I goin' too, Good - bye my Ri - ley O!
C.C.

[p. 215]

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OLE TAR RIVER

*533
539

Chorus: O, On the ole Tar river
O—eee[14]
O, On the ole Tar river
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Tar river goin' run tomorrow
O—eee
Tar river goin' run tomorrow
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Tar river run black an' dirty
O—eee
Tar river run black an' dirty
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Tar river goin' to water my horses
O—eee
Tar river goin' to water my horses
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Ole Tar river is a healin' water
O—eee
Ole Tar river is a healin' water
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Ole Tar river run free an' easy
O—eee
Ole Tar river run free an' easy
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Chorus: Way down, way down in the country
O—eee
Way down, way down in the country
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

[14] In some sections such a refrain is called a howl. In Seaboard Slave States, Olmstead calls it "Jodeling" or "The Carolina Yell" and describes its use by a group of Negro laborers. "Suddenly one raised such a sound as I never heard before; a long, loud, musical shout, rising and falling, and breaking into falsetto, his voice ringing through the woods, in the clear, frosty night air, like a bugle call. As he finished, the melody was caught up by another, and then another, and then by several in chorus." Olmstead goes on to say that a similar response was sung by this group of Negroes as they put their shoulders to a bale of cotton and rolled it up an embankment:

[461]

"Come brederen, come; let's go at it, come now, eoho! roll away
eeoho-eeoho-weeioho-i!"

A different example, sung by Negro boat hands, is given in another chapter by this observant gentleman:

"Ye see dem boat way dah ahead . . .
Oahoiohieu . . .
Dey's burnin' not'n but fat [wood] an' rosum
Oahoiohieu."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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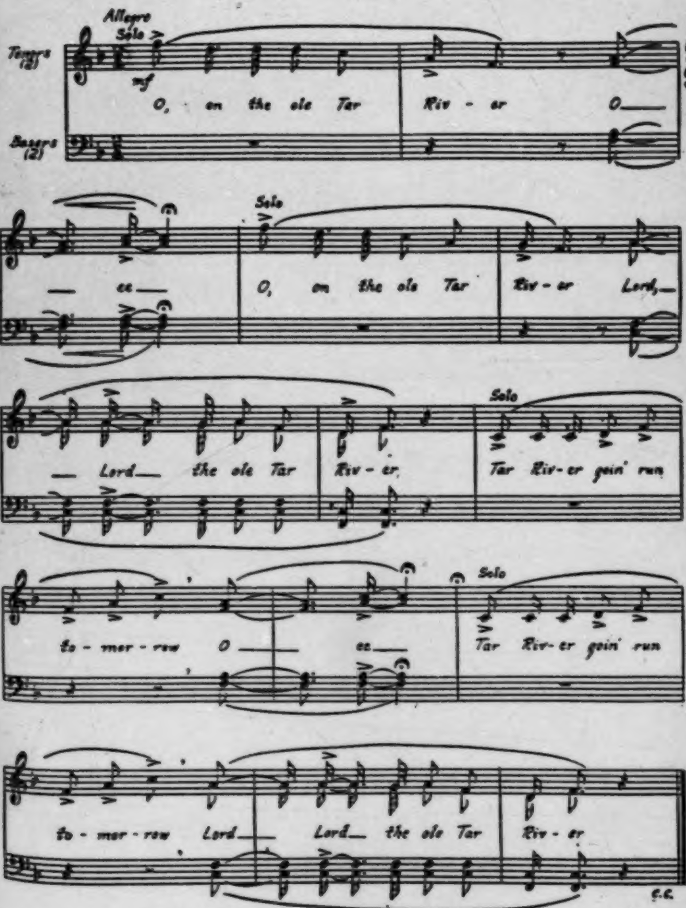
Allegro
Solo
Tenors (2)
Basses (2)
mf
O, on the ole Tar Riv - er O — ee —
Solo
O, on the ole Tar Riv - er Lord, — Lord — the ole Tar Riv - er.
Solo
Tar Riv - er goin' run to - mor - row O — ee —
Solo
Tar Riv - er goin' run to - mor - row Lord — Lord — the ole Tar Riv - er
c.c.

533
539

[p.217]

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● 533
539

THIS TIME ANOTHER YEAR

This time another year
I may be gone
In some lonesome graveyard
O Lord how long!
My brother broke the ice an' gone
O Lord how long
My brother broke the ice an' gone
O Lord how long!

Befo' this time another year
I may be gone
In some lonesome graveyard
O Lord how long!
Mind my sister how you walk on the cross
O Lord how long
Your right foot slip an' y'ur soul get los'
O Lord how long!

HAUL AWAY, I'M A ROLLIN' KING

Haul away, I'm a rollin' king
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Yonder come a flounder flat on the groun'
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Belly to the groun' an' back to the sun
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Ain' but one thing worry me
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
I leave my wife in Tennessee
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Haul away, I'm a rollin' king
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.

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● 533
539
[461]
[505]

SUNDOWN BELOW

This tune was sung at the end of the day as a hint to the captain, when the hold was too dark for the stevedores to see what they were doing:

Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down in the hole below
Sundown
Sundown below.
I hear my captain say
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.

MY SOUL BE AT RES'

One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—goin' be at res'
My soul be at res'.
Be at res' till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
It won't be long—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Goin' t' hitch on my wings an' try the air
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
You a'ks fo' me an' I'll be gone
My soul be at res'.

ANNIEBELLE

● 533 461 Of all the shanties, this concerning Anniebelle appears to be adaptable to the most varied uses, and to be the most widely distributed. Joe tells me he learned it over forty years ago from the stevedores who loaded lumber on the vessels at the Hilton-Dodge mills, but its main use was for "spikin' steel" on the railroads. I notice, however, that he puts the song to equally good use in chopping wood or swinging the weed cutter. In the mines it is called a "hammerin' song."

533 539

Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't weep
Hunh!
Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't moan
Hunh!
Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't go
Hunh!
Leave home.
Hunh!
When I throw
Hunh!
My head
Hunh!
In the bar
Hunh!
Room doo'
Hunh!
I'll never
Hunh!
Get drunk
Hunh!
No mo'.
Hunh!
Don't want t' hurt nobody
Hunh!

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O-h no
Hunh! 533•
O-h no 539
Hunh!
Dis ole hammer[15]
Hunh!
Kill John Henry
Hunh!
Laid him low buddy
Hunh!
Laid him low.
Hunh!

At this point Joe interpolated rhythmically: "Stan' by for another verse."

Ain't no hammer
Hunh!
In this mount'in
Hunh!
Ring like mine buddy
Hunh!
Ring like mine buddy.
Hunh!

Several years ago I heard the following version sung by Boogaloo, one of Darien's happy-go-lucky Negroes, as he cut weeds on the highway shoulders in front of Josephine's house. It was amusing to read in a recent issue of *Time* a letter from Mary J. Phillips telling of the explanation of the present war Boogaloo had given her husband. Mrs. Phillips quotes Boogaloo as saying: "Boss, I tells you what I thinks about this here war. Germany, some back, she starts a crap game, threw an eight, then falls off. Now she wants her money back and starts grabbing." I imagine that Boogaloo's speech was more consistent all through, but the thought is clearly his. 533 [460]

This is the hammer that kill John Henry (539)
Tell 'im I'm dead, buddy, tell 'im I'm dead
Cap'n Smith what you reckon?
Ten-pound hammer kill John Henry
Kill' my buddy, Lord, but 'e can't kill me.

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[15] Sometimes he specifies "nine-poun' hammer."

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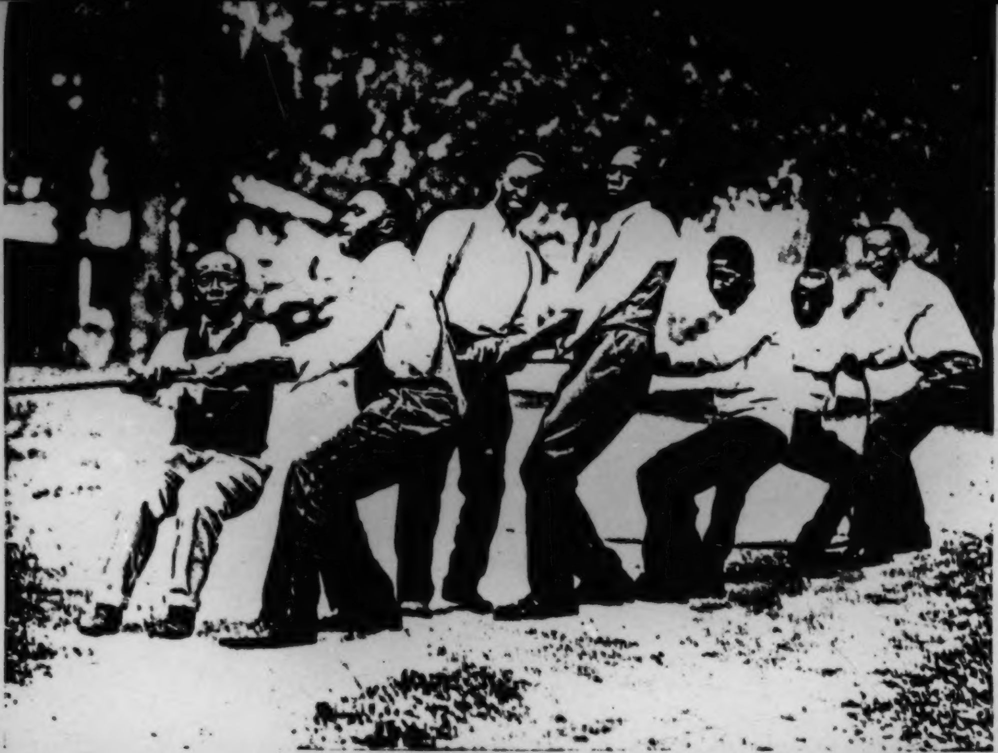
533
461
142
291



32. *St. Simon's Shanty Singers*

[facing p 224]

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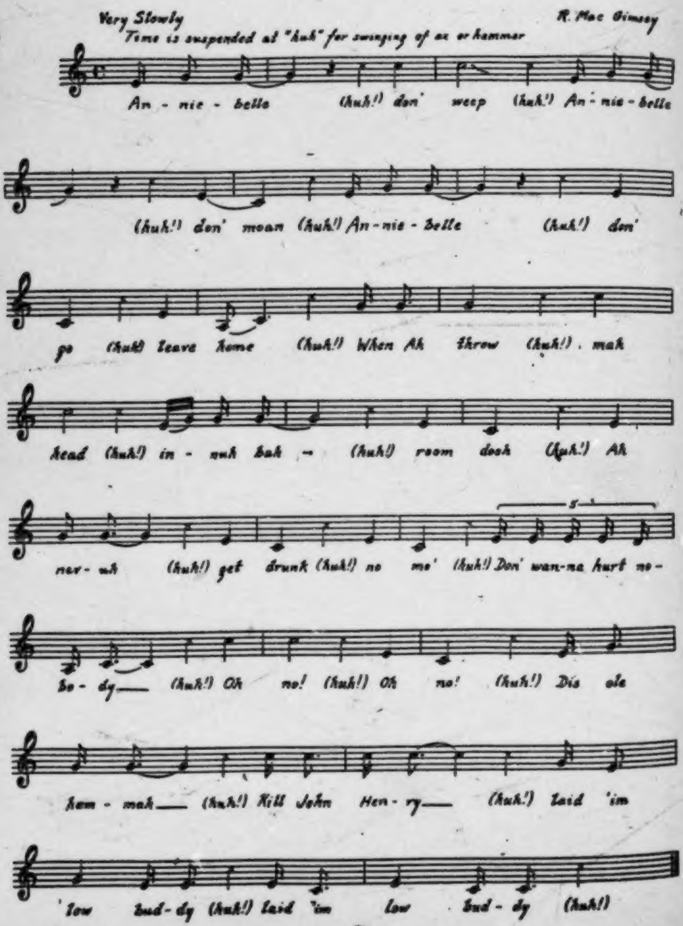
56. ANNIEBELLE

● 533
539


Very Slowly
Time is suspended at "huh" for swinging of ax or hammer
R. Mac Gimsey
An - nie - belle (huh!) don' weep (huh!) An - nie - belle
(huh!) don' moan (huh!) An - nie - belle (huh!) don'
go (huh!) leave home (huh!) When Ah throw (huh!) mah
head (huh!) in - nuh bah - (huh!) room doah (huh!) Ah
ner - uh (huh!) get drunk (huh!) no mo' (huh!) Don' wan-na hurt no-
bo - dy (huh!) Oh no! (huh!) Oh no! (huh!) Dis ole
ham - mah (huh!) Kill John Hen - ry (huh!) laid 'im
'low bud - dy (huh!) laid 'im low bud - dy (huh!)

[p. 224]

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243 461 (535) Julia said that when only a small amount of rice was to be thrashed, the grain was stripped from the straw by hand, and put on a good clean floor. With a quic and effective dance step, the outer husk was scuffed off. On Sapelo the work wa done to a similar step, with these words:

● 533 539

Peas an' the rice done done
Higho–Higho!
Beaufort boat done come
Higho–Higho!
How do you know–done heard it blow
Higho–Higho!

On St. Simon's, Julia Armstrong sings still another version:

New rice an' okra–Nana–Nana! [18]
Eat some an' leave some–Nana–Nana!
Beat rice to bum-bum
Eat some an' leave some.

I am told that Old Adam Proctor hoed rice to the tune of:

Way over yonder in that new bright worl'
Poo' sinner got a home at las'

and tied up the sheaves to:

Do Lord remember me–Do Lord remember me
Way over in Beulah Lan'–Do Lord remember me.

(535) A shout song was often used for the rice dance. The following lines indicat how the rhythm changed. While walking around in a circle with a preliminar scuffle, the "t'rashers" sang the slow part as in shouting.

Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

---

[18] According to Dr. Turner, "nana" means grandmother.

533
539
You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hollowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have [412] seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting [461] them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

243
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[17] *William Ellis in his History of Madagascar, 1838, makes it clear that our early rice planters got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In Seed from Madagascar Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.*

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PEAS AN' THE RICE

● 533
539
(243)

In her youth, Julia Walker employed these rhythmic lines to help in thrashing rice on the floor.[18]

Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice
Peas an' the rice done done done done
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.
New rice an' okra, eat some an' lef' some
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.

243
171

[18] *James A. Grant in a* Walk across Africa *tells of many interesting things he saw in 1861 on the way from Zanzibar to Uganda. "On the third of April the rice harvest was being gathered. . . . The reapers consisted of negro women and girls, who sang pleasantly. . . . The thrashing of the rice was novel. A quantity of ears was placed upon a cow's hide, slaves in irons were made to work it with their toes and feet, and winnow it in the wind; and after being thoroughly sun-dried upon a clear space of cow-dunged ground, it was fit for the process of shelling in the large pestle and mortar. If a considerable amount was to be thrashed, a bludgeon answered the purpose of the negroes' feet. . . . If our Seedees had to clean rice in the wooden mortar, a dozen hands would set about the work of two. It could not be done without those who worked beating time with the pestle to their song, the lookers-on clapping hands and stamping their feet. The work and song never ceased till the rice was pounded almost into dust—such joyous reckless creatures are these simple Africans!" To the Southerner of the nineteenth century this account presents a familiar picture.*

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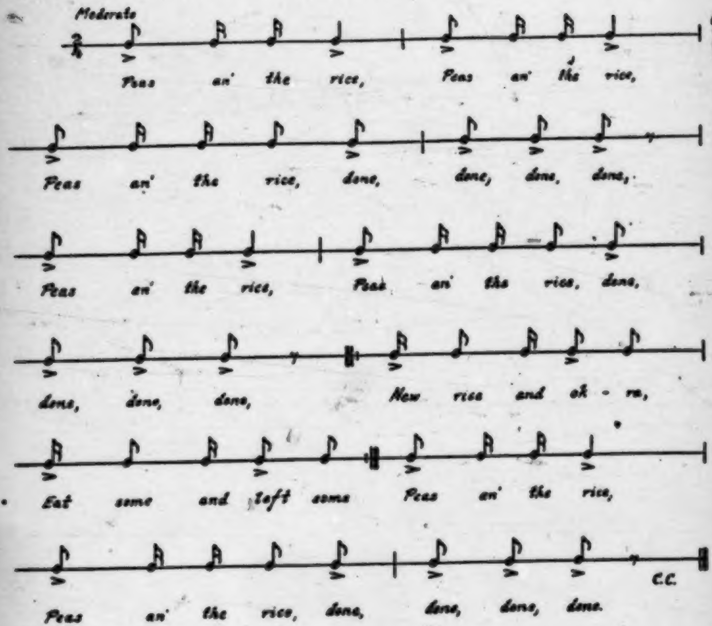
58. PEAS AN' THE RICE

533
539


Moderato
Peas an' the rice, Peas an' the rice,
Peas an' the rice, done, done, done, done,
Peas an' the rice, Peas an' the rice, done,
done, done, done, New rice and ok - ra,
Eat some and left some Peas an' the rice,
Peas an' the rice, done, done, done, done.
C.C.

[p.233]

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HARD TIME IN OLE VIRGINNY

243 On Sapelo, in hunting up Emma Johnson's twins, I came upon such a picture as must have been common in plantation days. Under the immense live oaks, two boys were beating rice in a home-made mortar. Chickens were all about, picking up stray grains. A couple of fanners were on the ground ready to fan the rice as soon as the hulls were loosened in the mortar. Fanning, as can be imagined, is done by jumping the rice in the flat basket and letting the wind do the rest;[19] but I noticed that Emma was thrifty, and the rice hulls—which looked like bran—fell on oilcloth laid on the ground. She told me they were to be fed to the pigs. The boys were
243 "shamed" and stopped singing when I came up, but there was no shyness about
● 533 Emma. She seized one of the pestles in the middle and sang a combination of the shanty, "Hard Time in Ole Virginny," the religious song, "Aye Lord, Buddin' of the Fig Tree," and a dance song, "My Ole Missus Promise Me."

533
539

Summer comin' again
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the rainbow
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the cloud
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
My ole missus promise me
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
When she die she set me free
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
She live so long
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Her head got bald
  Hard time in ole Virginny.

[821] [19] *If there is no wind, the one who does the fanning whistles for it.*

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A. B. A. B. A.

243 533 461 The rhythm of this nonsensical Butler Island song enables the rice beaters to do work which would otherwise be extremely tiresome.[20] It continues as long as the work lasts, with no change in rhythm and very little in the words.

533 531
Uncle July mortal man, stan' right by de doo'
An' see how y'r rice done mash.[21]
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A. B. A.
Go A. B. go
Go A. B. go
July'll cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' July'll cut y'r win'.
July de mortal man
July cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
Go Lizzy go, Billy goin' t' cut y'r win'.
Go Emma go, Gally goin' t' cut y'r win'.

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[20] *Mrs. Cate tells me that each plantation had its particular songs for beating rice, just as its rowing songs were unlike those of other plantations.*

[91] [21] *The footnote on page 232 suggests that the "reckless" Africans pounded rice in the same careless fashion.*

I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539
I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay."[22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell[23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

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[171]
[22] The editors of Slave Songs of the United States say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
●533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead,
first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated
black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The
other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally
they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange
familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our
ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several reasons.
567 In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
(342) their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
(114) with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children"
—which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses
[243] a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet
high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to
rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
(243) particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes
associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but
little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary
than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the
whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
[162] there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas
in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more
whites than colored people."

175 I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
567 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
243 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
[164] for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

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[24] About the same ratio as when *I* first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

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175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[23]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and
higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much
to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
● [533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I
hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes
always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining
plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century
among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the
duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr.
Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a
musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last
violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain
these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The
statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the
identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee
and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-

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114 [23] *The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.*

184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan
Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp
plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

175 In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and
West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners
533 on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The
Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

533 Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did
—his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

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[28] *They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in* Our Todays and Yesterdays, *"there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.*

[171] *In* A Walk across Africa, *Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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MISCELLANEOUS WORK SONGS

533 461 By this time the reason for placing this chapter at the end of the collection must be obvious. Practically any of the foregoing songs were utilized in one kind of labor or another. The shout songs were peculiarly adapted to rowing; and certain of the religious songs were suited to the stevedore's need of a swinging tune in work that was continuous. There were, however, other tasks which required a special rhythm, dependent oftentimes upon the mood of the laborer, and these occasions were likely to bring forth extemporaneous compositions. Mrs. Shadman told me [296] that laundresses generally sang while ironing, and this is one of the improvisations she had heard:

[539]
Do tu'key buzzard len' me y'u wing
T' fly ova yonda t' see Miss Geo'gia King.

[234] [539] She had also heard churning done to these coaxing words:

Come budda come, Missus want e budda, come budda come.

533 461 296 But it was over the wash-board that a singer gave free scope to a religious turn of mind. Some years ago a Northern Negro composer, unfamiliar with the traditional songs of his race, heard the following spiritual sung by a washerwoman while at work. She claimed she had made it up; he innocently believed her, and told reporters that new spirituals are born every day. No one wishes more sincerely than I that such might be the case, but this particular song was sung in Glynn County long before he was born. It is Joe's favorite for swinging the weed cutter:

533 539
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
O Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.[27]

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[27] A variation of this verse is expressed in these words:

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' lay in the grave so long
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

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● 533 After death I got to stan' a tes'
539 After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompani-
461 ment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune
264 which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my
(171) hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber
village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why
I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing fre-
quently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so
enjoyable.

(539) I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South,
354 and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging
pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of
the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indi-
cate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking,
in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and
for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The
248 best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells
567 how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of
461 the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists
412) half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her
half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the
(533) Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed
that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

533 539 What y'u gwine t' do fo' June month? Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
June month's a ha'd month—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Jersualem in de mornin'—Jerusalem Jerusalem.

Floyd sang several variations of the central theme, but as he said himself, "This is enough!" Janey's song was practically the same except that she substituted "Zion" for "Jerusalem."

You mus' pray ha'd—June a ha'd month
June month a sailin'—Oh, Zion O Zion.
What y'u do fo' June month?
Y'u pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Oh, Zion O Zion.

252 256 402 In her "Reminiscences" Mrs. Conrad tells how meal was ground on Broughton Island in a Biblical handmill: "Large stones with a hole in the uppermost one that connected it with the roof of the shed in which it stood,[28] held a stout pole. The women would take hold of this piece of wood and turn the stone with a celerity and ease that was surprising. I can shut my eyes now at any time, and hear the whirring of the stones, the soft rustle of the meal as it fell in the basket placed to receive it and the sound of the women's voices singing at the mill." However, from this scanty description, I could not visualize how the mill worked until Belle Murray of St. Simon's explained that a large block of wood supported the stones; that the lower stone was held in place through the use of a bar of iron called a "spindle"—about one and one-half inches square and eighteen inches long—and that it fitted into an auger hole in the timber underneath. It appears that after the square piece of iron had made the lower stone secure, it abruptly ended in a half-inch bolt, about three inches long, which went through a round hole in a rectangular piece of iron, about two and one-half inches by three and one-half inches and half-an-inch thick, called a "frog." The corn was fed into the round hole in the stone above the frog; three holes of varying depth and width—chipped out of the top stone only about three inches from its rim—regulated the fineness or coarseness of the meal through shifting the pole from one hole to another. A wedge was also put under the stones to tilt them when one wanted the mill to run more easily. According to Mrs. Conrad,

[28] *In all probability a hole in an overhead beam engaged the upper end of the pole at the time its lower end—on a slant—was moving the stone with "celerity and ease."*

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252 the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the
256 stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell
[402] into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

● 533 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the
461 Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with
539 a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rata-tat-tat!

Next door: Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rata-tat-tat!

And the next: I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rata-tat-tat!

534 Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden
533 times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical
[202] note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spald-
[799] ing's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

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● 533 567 Quarterman told me that when the Negroes "suspicioned" someone was telling tales to the driver to get one of them a whipping, they would sing a song like the following while at work in the field:

[539]

O Judyas he wuz a 'ceitful man
He went an' betray a mos' innocen' man.
Fo' thirty pieces a silver dat it wuz done
He went in de woods an' e' self he hung.

793 533 A Negro "stump-knocker"—as itinerant preachers without a regular charge used to be called—frankly told me he wasn't much on preaching, but when it came to singing he always got his people—and a meal. Another preacher of this class, with a remarkable flow of rhythmic words and a fine grasp of the dramatic build-up—not necessarily connected with ideas—boasted to me of his ability to get his congregation "goin'."

FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

248 533 When I asked Josephine what the words "five fingers in the boll" meant, she explained that in the shade at the bottom of the stalk of cotton the bolls are likely to be rotten; they come off in the hand, and "y'u can't make any time grabbin' de cotton out uv 'em." "Fingers" are the compartments holding the white fiber. The song has reference to the variety that contains five in a boll, but I am told that some have three, and others four. I confess I never noticed how many there were.

533 539

Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud[29] all day
Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud all day.
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll.
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day.

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[433] [248] [29] *Ninety pounds of cotton was looked upon as the least a hand should pick in a day.*

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60. FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

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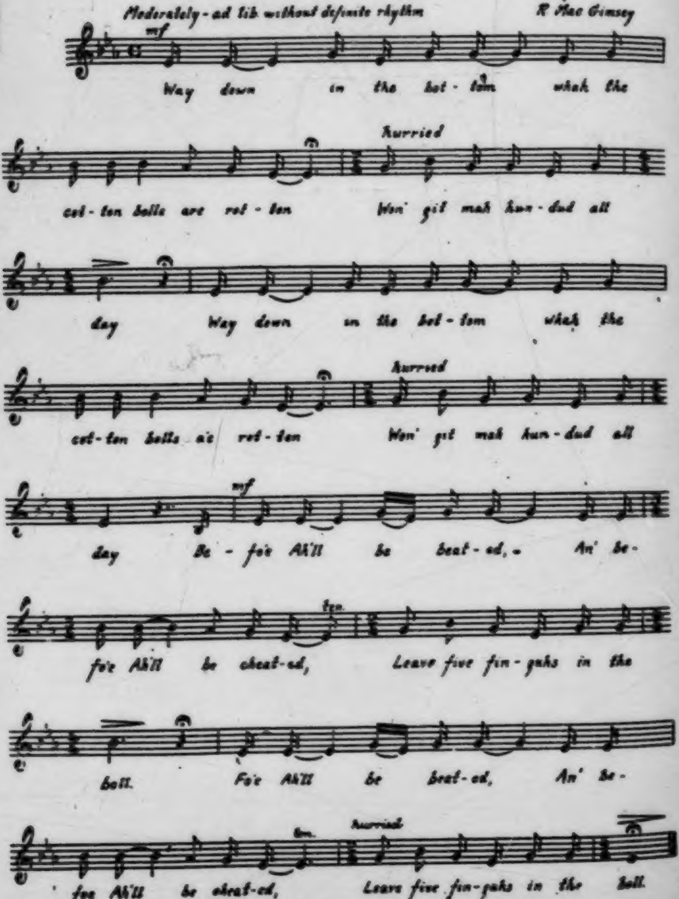
Moderately - ad lib without definite rhythm
R Mac Gimsey
mf
Way down in the bot - tom whah the
cot - ton bolls are rot - ten
hurried
Won' git mah hun - dud all
day Way down in the bot - tom whah the
cot - ton bolls a'e rot - ten
hurried
Won' git mah hun - dud all
day Be - fo'e Ah'll be beat - ed, - An' be -
mf
fo'e Ah'll be cheat - ed,
ten.
Leave five fin - guhs in the
boll. Fo'e Ah'll be beat - ed, An' be -
foe Ah'll be cheat - ed,
ten.
hurried
Leave five fin - guhs in the boll

[p.248]

DRINKIN' OF THE WINE

533 The swinging rhythm of the communion song, "Drinkin' of the Wine," made
697 it a favorite with the chain-gang for cutting weeds along the highway. The afternoon
[461] I heard it sung by convicts in front of my house, there were no chains to be seen or heard. When I asked the guard the reason, he told me they were used only to enforce camp discipline. The prisoners had been on their good behavior that week, and the chains had been left off.

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I mentioned the incongruity of wearing stripes[30] and singing spirituals. He laughed and said the prisoners got very religious while in camp. It is a fact, however, that the Negro takes his religion very seriously, and, given time for meditation—enforced though it be—quite naturally reacts in this way. Then, too, he apparently
577 has a different concept of morality from white people, and in consequence the idea
673 prevails among us that he does not put his religion into practice. But, for that
685 matter, who does? Each race seems to have its own particular blind spot, and inability to recognize the sanctity of property appears to the white man to be the hereditary weakness of the Negroes in this country, as in Africa. Before the white man meddled with their lives, it was considered legitimate business for the inhabitants of one community to steal from another. Up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, I am told, many a slave held the ingenious idea that property could not steal from property. It is possible that this notion, coupled with the viewpoint inherited from Africa,[31] may account for the tolerance still shown by the Negro toward the light-fingered members of the race who run afoul of the law.

000 According to a *London Morning Post* correspondent at Nairobi, capital of Kenya: "To the native mind there is nothing morally wrong in thefts of stock from other natives and from European farmers." This is possibly the reason why it is hard to get our primitive Negro to see that it is wrong to take a chicken from the roost when he is hungry, or a shirt off the clothes-line when he is half-naked. The same

[30] *The "lifers" wear a plain drab suit and the lesser offenders, stripes. It should be the other way about. When convicts escape, as they often do, protective coloration gives the advantage to those who should not have it.*

[171] [31] *In* Astley's Collection, *John Leo is quoted as saying that the Negroes on and between the* Senegal and Gambia *rivers lived in common. They had no property in land, but supported themselves in equal state, upon the natural produce of the country.* Seagrave also comments on *the fact there is no property in ground. The king's license is obtained and the people then go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds which they burn, "and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed."*

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000 correspondent goes on to tell of the difficulties encountered by the Governor of Kenya in stamping out what we consider crime. "Imprisonment is found to be no deterrent. Nor among the Kikuyu does an ex-convict lose caste in the tribe. After he is released from jail the sacrifice of a single goat puts everything right. A new suit of a white tunic and shorts is thoroughly enjoyed by native prisoners for theft in East Africa. Fines are not always a success because the native, well-fed, housed and clothed at government expense, actually enjoys his term as a vacation."

697 Our own prison camp in Glynn County formerly offered an example of the same problem. A colored convict whose time was up pleaded with Mr. Higgenbotham—who was the court of last appeal at the camp—to be allowed to stay. A living being hard to get nowadays, he figured he could not provide for himself as well as the county did.[22] But the authorities were firm, and he was obliged to move on. Of course, he knew how to get back if times were too hard. It is the same with us, as in Africa, when it comes to any stigma being attached to a Negro who has served a [554] term in jail or spent time on the chain-gang. Ex-convicts assume the same status in their community as they enjoyed before the county forcibly detained them.

Today the chain-gang is a thing of the past, and our roadsides and drainage ditches are neglected. No one need tell me that prison walls and ball-playing are proper substitutes for the healthy outdoor life that our convicts formerly led. There is a great deal of sentimentality connected with the discouragement of crime, and the abolition of the chain-gang is one of its manifestations. Of course there were abuses, but they also occur within prison walls—only there they are not so readily found out.

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Chorus: Drinkin' of the wine—wine—wine
Drinkin' of the wine
O—yes—my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

[22] *My corner was for years the favorite resting-place at noon for the convicts when they worked on the island. I saw the substantial rations served them, and it is no wonder the discharged convict felt he could go farther and fare worse. I also observed that the model prisoners were well treated. One day I overheard a guard say very hospitably to one of my Negro singers, who was working for me: "Want to come back?" With a good-humored chuckle, the man replied: "No, thank you." It seems that he had been mixed up in a drinking affair in which a knife had figured. He told me he had run away, but had found the world a hard place to live in—so he had come home, surrendered, and taken his medicine. The guard said he had been a star prisoner.*

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Eatin' of the bread—bread—bread
Eatin' of the bread—O yes my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

If my mother ask for me
Tell her Death done summon' me.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

If y'u get there before I do
Tell my Lord I'm comin' too.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

Ain' but one thing I done wrong
Stayin' in the wilderness mos' too long.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

WHEN I'M GONE TO COME NO MO'

533 Nobody but a Negro could employ such entrancing elaborations as occur in the singing of "Gone—gone—gone," and no transcription could possibly give it. Our musical method is opposed to that of the Negro, and, try as we may, we cannot achieve his strange inflections, nor place emphasis as he does. A song may appear perfectly simple, but try to learn it, and the simplicity vanishes.

533 697 The first time I heard this song, a gang of Glynn County convicts was using its rhythm to heave great clods of black earth out of the tide-water creek behind my house. The leader was such an excellent singer that I asked the guard how soon he was due to be free. The man did not have much more time to serve, his record on the gang was good, and his last offense was nothing more than taking a stool he fancied from an office; but he was a repeater. He just could not leave other people's property alone. Even though I coveted his voice, obligation to the community would not permit me to encourage his presence on the island:

II

FOLK SONGS OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

121 533

The first collection of Negro folk songs ever published came largely from St. Helena Island.[1] The cultural and geographical isolation of the island, with its high proportion of Negro population, makes it a fruitful field for the study of certain scientific questions concerning Negro songs. Unfortunately, however, the field was neglected until 1925, when N. G. J. Ballanta, an African Negro, published his *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*.

The songs known as spirituals are easily the favorites of the islanders. They are sung on more occasions and by a larger proportion of the people than any other type of song. For this and other reasons, the present discussion will be devoted largely to the spirituals, and especially to certain scientific problems relating to their origin.

FOLK SONG PROCESSES AND TRAITS ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

533

Secular Songs

Secular songs are conspicuous for their scarcity on St. Helena Island. Something must be allowed, of course, for the difficulty involved in collecting seculars in a conservative community like St. Helena, but even then this kind of song is relatively rare. A few obsolete minstrel and vaudeville songs, a few insignificant songs brought in by World War soldiers, some phonograph songs of recent importation, and a dozen or more children's game songs of English descent are the only secular songs ordinarily

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[1] Allen, *Slave Songs of the U. S.*, 1867. Of the 136 songs in this book, 55 were from St. Helena.

• 533 sung on the island. The possession of banjos, guitars, and the like is not quite proper, so these aids to song are not frequently heard. Occasionally a quartet of young men will get together for an evening of "close harmony," while parties, ice cream suppers, picnics and other frolics afford opportunities for singing secular songs.

Religious Songs

Three kinds of religious songs are sung: (1) the old standard church hymns, (2) new choir songs, and (3) spirituals. The hymns are known by most of the old people, who sing them in the same way their masters used to sing them. The leader announces, "number ninety-two, long meter," and reads out a line or two; the congregation sings this in double slow tempo, the leader reads again, and so on through stanza after stanza of Watts or Wesley. To one who is not accustomed to it, this manner of singing is little short of painful. In the old days the Negroes necessarily sang thus, but they retain the pattern now even when most of them know the hymns by heart and could sing them through in regular tempo if they wanted to. Each syllable, each tone, is prolonged to the breaking point, and when four or five words in succession fall on the same pitch, the effect is maddening to the uninitiated. Whereas it would take the ordinary church singer about fifteen seconds to sing the lines,

Jesus, lover of my soul
Let me to thy bosom fly,

it takes these people forty or more. As a rule, the hymns are sung in unison, although an occasional bit of bass, tenor, or alto is attempted. Whatever else may be said of the hymns, they certainly are not sung with anything like the physical and spiritual satisfaction which accompanies the singing of the old spirituals.

Every church has its choir and choir leader, and some of the churches have a gallery in the rear where the choir sits. Song books of the modern type are purchased for the choir, and new songs are practised patiently in order that they may be introduced in church.[2] The congregation listens with pride, forbearing to join in unless something very familiar is sung. These songs differ from the old hymns in that they are sung through, without lining, in ordinary tempo and with fair harmonizations, but they, too, fall far short of the spirituals in beauty of execution and in unity of emotional expression.

It is the spiritual that really gives the Negroes a chance to express themselves in song. Everyone on the island knows the spirituals and loves them. Church services and praise meetings may often open with hymns, but they end with spirituals. In Penn School chapel exercises they are always sung, and they are the favorites in all the other schools on the island. Scarcely a meeting of a club or a society opens without the singing of a spiritual. Standing in the darkness near a small praise house, hearing the mellow voices of the little group within, abandoned for the moment to a spiritual, one realizes anew that this kind of song has an all-important function in Negro life.

St. Helena, being in an isolated culture area, is an excellent laboratory for the study of the spirituals. Here is found little of that racial inferiority complex which for

[2] I observed that several of the choir songs recently introduced on St. Helena are songs which were common in the small white churches fifteen years ago. This is an interesting fact which bears upon the questions to be discussed later.

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533 try, and here there is felt comparatively little back-wash
a time threatened to destroy the spirituals in the up-coun-
from the recent exploitation of Negro songs. In such an
area certain folk-song traits and processes may be observed
more clearly than elsewhere. Some of these may be indicated in the following observations on the St. Helena spirituals.

[184] 1. The spirituals of St. Helena are not markedly different from the Negro spirituals as a whole. They are sung in the characteristic sea-island dialect, of course, and minor variations occur, but fundamentally they are one with Negro spirituals in other parts of the country.

2. The spirituals are sung in unison for the most part. There is very little singing in parts except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other quartets or groups which have practised their songs. Heard from a distance, the singing in praise house or church often gives the impression of multiple part singing, but this effect is more or less of an illusion caused by some of the singers varying the pitch of a given tone or attempting a bit of tenor or alto here, a bit of bass there. Those who look for some weird or new harmonic element contributed to American music by the Negroes of the Sea Islands will be disappointed, for such harmonies as they do use are in no wise different from conventional white harmonies.

533
171 3. There is apparently very little invention or improvisation going on among the island singers. Practically all of the spirituals sung on the island appear to have originated elsewhere and to have migrated to the sea-island region. Because of the continued survival there of many songs rarely heard outside the Sea Islands, it is easy

to assume that the songs are indigenous. But recent investigation has shown that these island songs are found among Negroes west of the Appalachians and in an obsolescent state among individuals in the piedmont of Virginia and the Carolinas, which tends to show that the songs originated in the upper South, travelled southward and westward, and are now sung only in a few marginal places. 533 171

Perhaps this explains why there is so little mention of local names or incidents in the island spirituals. The St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* tells of "Brother Fuller settin' on de tree of life," referring to the Rev. Richard Fuller, a white Baptist minister who was much esteemed by the slaves. But the tune and stanza pattern of this song probably originated farther north, and the island Negroes merely inserted local names when they learned it. *Don' Let de Win' Blow Heah No Mo'* grew out of the severe storm of 1893, but it appears to have been composed by some individual in Savannah or Charleston. 533

Although songs were often attributed to local people, only one instance came to the writer's attention in which a person actually claimed authorship. This man frankly said, upon being questioned, that songs known as *his* songs were not his own compositions. He said that they were merely songs which he had "caught" from someone in Savannah or from little "ballets" which he had purchased at some church convention or celebration on the mainland, and had introduced to his church.

4. The secular tendency has not been weeded out of the island spirituals to the same extent that it has among more sophisticated groups. Often when spirituals were being recorded in the outlying schools, stanzas like the fol-

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•533 lowing were sung in a perfectly matter-of-fact way:

[539]

See dat man gwine 'cross de fiel'
Kickin' up dus' like a automobile.

Oh, if I die in Tennessee,
Don' wan' my friends to grieve attah me.

That the line between religious and secular songs is not always clear was evidenced by the fact that a call for spirituals in the little island schools often brought forth such responses as *The Green Grass Grew All Around* and *Johnny's So Long at the Fair*. This sort of thing is, of course, not peculiar to St. Helena, but it is more apparent on the Sea Islands than elsewhere because of the relatively retarded cultural status there.

5. Several variations of the same song occur side by side. For example, *Mary Had a Baby* is sung in three ways, *You Better Run* in three ways, *Wrastlin' Jacob* in two, *Jacob's Ladder* in two, and so on. Of course, this trait is not peculiar to the Sea Islands. In fact the variants of this sort probably originated elsewhere, but they are more apparent on St. Helena because of their convergence and survival there. One rare instance of the origin of a local variant was observed on St. Helena during the past year. In one of the churches a spiritual entitled *You Better Live So Jesus Can Use You* was among the favorites. It was sung rather fast, with pronounced swing and syncopation, the tune being as follows:

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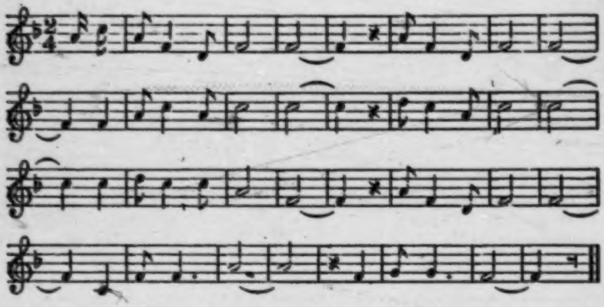
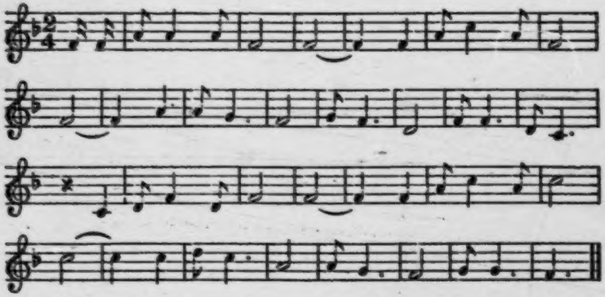
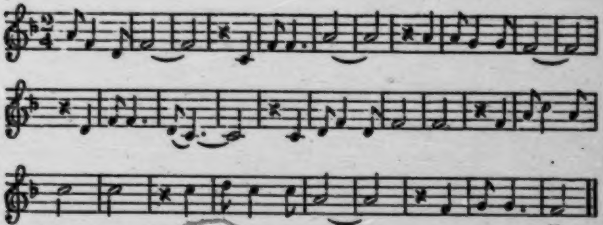


The pastor of another church liked the song, but considered it slightly undignified, so he set to work and revised it to suit his own church. He taught his people to sing it as follows:

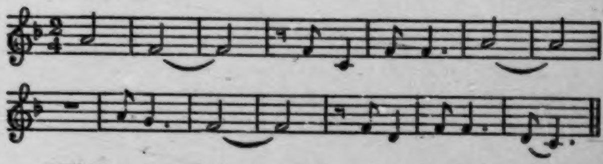


6. The same *motif* is found in different tunes, regardless of words, to an unusual extent. This tendency is found in all music, whether it is folk music or art music, but it seems to be especially strong in the spirituals. The writer is convinced that a careful analysis of Negro spirituals will show that less than a hundred separate *motifs* have given rise to over five hundred tunes. The tendency

533 is especially observable on St. Helena because of the convergence and survival of so many types there. A thorough demonstration of this trait of the spirituals would require much space, but a few examples will show what is meant. Take, for example, the instance just cited, where a man consciously varied a tune. He probably realized that the derived tune was very much like the pattern, but it is doubtful if he saw that his revision is as much like the following tune, *Who's Gwine-a Lay Dis Body Down,* as it is the pattern:



And, to show how complicated this sort of thing may become, the same *motif* crops out again in a spiritual, *Cry Holy Unto de Lawd,* recently introduced from the upcountry. Its opening measures are as follows:



To cite one more instance, there is a similarity of *motif* in *Eagle's Wings* and in *My Mother Is Gone an' Lef' Me Behin',* the opening strains of which are, in the order named:

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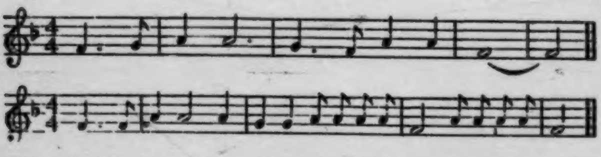

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The relationship does not end here, for many readers will at once see the same *motif* in an old white mountain song, *Careless Love,* and some may be able to trace it in still other songs. Anyone familiar with spiritual tunes can trace another striking sameness of *motif* in the choruses of the following spirituals: *Roll, Jordan, Roll; Ride on, Jesus; Lord, Remember Me;* and *I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray.*

A certain St. Helena song leader, at the writer's request, sang a spiritual which the leader had composed. The tune was identical with another St. Helena tune, yet the composer was unaware of the similarity until it had been pointed out to him. Thus musical imagination works and thus new songs arise in old clothes.

7. There is a constant process of change going on among the spirituals. No song has a permanent lease on life, even in isolation. It may be passed on as a "new" song elsewhere, but in its old home it is an "old" song and must compete with newcomers. The collection made by Allen and others and published as *Slave Songs* just after the Civil War contained fifty-five songs from St. Helena. Of these, less than a dozen are commonly heard on the island today. The present writer returned to St. Helena a year after making his first collection of spirituals there and found several songs in vogue which he never heard once during his first visit. One of these was an old song

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533 (178) revived, but the others had come in from "foreign" parts. Migrants and visitors coming back from Charleston or Savannah or "up North" occasionally introduce new songs.

SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN GENERAL

The Problem Stated

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The spirituals are too well known to Americans to need any further words of praise or appreciation. They stand on their own merits, and nothing that might be said here could add to the esteem in which they are generally held. Rather it is the purpose of the present essay to attack certain scientific questions, long neglected, centering around the relationship of Negro music to white music.

There are several points of view from which the spirituals can be studied. First, there is the point of view of appreciation. The majority of the work done on these songs has been devoted to preserving them and pointing out their poetic and musical beauties and their place in Negro life. Then there is the point of view of the artist or musician, whose motive is to develop the music of the spirituals by improved harmonic arrangements or by using that music as the basis for artistic compositions. Finally there is the scientific approach wherein the spirituals are treated as data apart from all considerations of art and appreciation. The existence of a large body of appreciative and even sentimental literature on the spirituals is something of a hindrance to those who would treat them dispassionately, for anyone who voices an opinion contrary to that which has been generally accepted is likely to be suspected of some ulterior design by certain well-meaning but hyper-sensitive folk. It should be emphasized here that the outcome of any scientific inquiry into the roots of American Negro music has nothing to do with the beauty of that music or with the respect which one has for it. No sensible person would quit drinking water because it was found to be composed of A-B-C-X instead of A-B-C-D.

In his *Primitive Music*,[3] Wallaschek, a German writer, expressed the opinion that the Negro spirituals were much overrated. "They are unmistakably 'arranged'—not to say ignorantly borrowed—from the national songs of all nations, from military signals, well-known marches, German student-songs, etc." This started a heated discussion, with the majority of American opinion favoring the opposite theory, namely, that the spirituals are original creations of the Negro. It became fashionable to speak of the spirituals as "America's only indigenous folk song," of the "miracle of their creation," etc.

The publication of Ballanta's *Saint Helena Island Spirituals* has increased the need for research into the origins of American Negro music. In the foreword to his book, Ballanta has discussed at some length the characteristics of African and American Negro music, his opinion being that "no one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem." Since the publication of his book, Mr. Ballanta has pursued his researches in Africa with a view to showing further the African parentage of American Negro music, but the results of this work have not been published to date.

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[3] P. 61. *Cf.* Von Hornbostel's opinion that the spirituals are "songs made by the Negro in European style," in *International Review of Missions*, Oct., 1926.

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The problem may be stated as a problem in cultural anthropology: What happened when the Negro slave, possessing a system of music admittedly different from European or Western music, came into contact with the American white man's music? Did he retain the music of Africa? Did he adopt the white man's music? Did he invest a borrowed music with African characteristics? Did he build a distinctive music, a sort of synthesis, partaking of both Africa and America but unlike either? As was shown in the section on dialect, the low-country Negro dialect reflects the substitution of an English dialect heritage for African language traits. Does the same process hold good for music? St. Helena Island, representing a culture area where logically the African system of music should survive better than elsewhere in America, may throw some light on these questions.

The Comparison of Musics[4]

The logical procedure necessary for studying these questions involves (1) an analysis of the music of the American Negro as represented in the spirituals, (2) an analysis of the white music with which the slave came in contact, and (3) an analysis of African music in those parts of Africa from which our slaves were recruited. The comparisons may be quantitative or qualitative. A given trait may occur in all three musics, but, if it occurred in one very rarely and in the other two very frequently, it might indicate a relationship between the two latter. Likewise a certain trait which exists in two but is absent in the third may indicate a relationship. Because of the lack of

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[4] Some of the points presented here are discussed by Metfessel in *Phonophotography in Folk Music.*

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large collections of authentic native songs from West and Central Africa, the third analysis noted above cannot be carried out at present. Reference will be made, however, to the characteristics which various authorities have assigned to African music. The labors of Mr. Ballanta will, it is hoped, supply this need in the near future. The deficiency as far as the present study is concerned, is not as great as it might seem, for the first step in any event should be the comparison of American Negro music with American white music in order to determine whether the former is distinctive enough to warrant the search for its African origin. 121 533

The following specific points of comparison are suggested:

I. Words of Songs
  A. General subject matter
  B. Specific lines
  C. Forms or patterns
II. Tunes
  A. Modes and scales
  B. Modulations
  C. Intervals
  D. Endings on other than keynote
  E. Melodic patterns
III. Rhythm
  A. Metre
  B. Syncopation

When the substitution of the dominant culture for the slave culture has proceeded to the extent that it has in the case of the American Negro, logic favors first the premise that the root of any particular culture trait of the American Negro is apt to be found in the white culture of the 121 177 533

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121 slavery period. To say the least, anyone who is studying
177 the relation of African music to American Negro music
would be omitting the first step of the ladder if he failed
•533 to acquaint himself with the song environment of the Negro in slavery. As good a musician and scholar as Krehbiel analysed over 500 Negro songs, mostly spirituals, and pointed out certain things as characteristic of Negro songs without even suggesting that these characteristics ought to be checked up similarly in the white religious songs of a hundred years ago.

The American Cultural Background of the Negro Spiritual

121 White, in his *American Negro Folk-Songs,* has covered the American historical background of Negro religious song so well that it would be superfluous to do more than give a brief sketch here. Certain points, however, need to be emphasized.

000 American white hymnology has at least two distinct heritages. One is represented by the dignified, formal, poetic hymns of Watts, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others. The other is the heritage of the great revival and camp-meeting movement which reached its height in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of this movement and especially of the type of religious song which it ushered in, little is known.

First a word as to the general conduct of the people during revivals. From Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest writers to describe the movement, the following quotations are taken:

> . . . I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held

000 of which disappeared with the decline of the fervor for camp meetings. And to these might be added, since secular tunes have time and again "got religion," the vast body of white everyday social songs, traditional ballads, children's game songs, nursery rhymes, etc.

•533 177 Was the Negro in direct contact with the white revival song? The records of evangelists, travelers, and others show that he was often present at the meetings of the whites.[14] Bellinger, describing one of his big meetings, wrote: "The negroes are out in great crowds, and sing with voices that make the woods ring."[15] In 1845 a South Carolinian wrote that there were more Negro Baptists and Methodists than white in the South and that "almost everywhere they have precisely the same opportunities of attending worship that the whites have, and besides, special occasions for themselves exclusively."[16]

There is one more point which is pertinent here: prior to the Civil War nothing had been said about the Negro possessing a distinctive type of religious song. A few travellers had spoken of certain Negro songs as wild, barbaric, fugue-like, etc.,[17] but most of them commented on the Negro's knowledge of white religious songs. Sir Charles Lyell said of some Negro boatmen on the estate of Hamilton Couper, "occasionally they struck up a hymn,

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(113) [14] See for example, the works of Asbury and Dow; also Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*; Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes*; and various local histories of Methodist and Baptist churches.

[15] *Stray Leaves*, p. 17.

(113) [16] *Two Letters on Slavery in the United States*, by J. H. Hammond, Columbia, S. C., 1845, p. 25. Quoted by White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 37.

[17] Hundley, in his *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, thought that the Negroes had certain "wild choruses and lullaloos, which their fathers must have brought with them from Africa," but he described their religious songs as "not so peculiar and striking." P. 348.

taught them by the Methodists, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity."[18] Another English writer wrote:

> Just before bed-time more solemn sounds are heard: the negro is demonstrative in his religion, and loud and musical were heard every evening the hymns. . . . Remarkable for correctness are their songs, and both men's and women's voices mingled in soft though far-sounding harmony. Some old church tunes I recognized.[19]

Another writer stated that

> . . . the loudest and most fervent camp-meeting singers amongst the whites are constrained to surrender to the darkeys in "The Old Ship of Zion" or "I Want to go to Glory."[20]

William Howard Russell mentioned "those wild Baptist chants about the Jordan ~~in which~~ they (the Negroes) delight."[21] One of the most significant statements, however, is found in a little-known sketch by William Cullen Bryant. The poet visited a tobacco factory in Richmond in 1843. In a certain room about eighty Negroes sang as they worked. Among other comments on the singing, he quoted the proprietor of the factory as follows:

> "What is remarkable," he continued, "their tunes are all psalm tunes and the words are from hymn books; their taste is exclusively for sacred music; they will sing nothing else. Almost all these persons are church members; we have not a dozen about the factory who are not so. Most of them are of the Baptist persuasion; a few are Methodists."[22]

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[18] *Second Visit to the United States of North America*, etc., pp. 244-5.

[19] Rev. Wm. Wyndham Malet, *An Errand to the South in the Summer of 1862*, p. 49. In the library of Dr. Yates Snowden, Columbia, S. C.

[20] Hundley, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[21] *My Diary North and South*, p. 143.

[22] Quoted (probably from New York *Evening Post*) in DeBow's *Review*, n.s., I, 326 (1850).

•533 177 To the question with which one musician dismissed the matter of the Negro's white musical heritage—"Where is that wonderful matrix of hymnology out of which has grown these song jewels of Negro spirituals?"[23]—it may now be replied that such a matrix existed, that the Negro was familiar with it, and that it probably left a much deeper imprint upon him than has generally been supposed. The extent to which the Negro spiritual is based upon a white pattern will appear in the more detailed comparisons which follow.

The Spiritual in Relation to White Revival Songs and Other Folk Songs

Words

General Subject Matter. The subjects treated in the spirituals are so much the same as those in the white songs as to need only a passing comment. Heaven, hell, the judgment, appeals to the sinner, Biblical characters, Satan, the jubilee, the gospel trumpet, the gospel ship, the chariot, the river of Jordan, the union band, etc., are the leading subjects in both the Negro and the white songs.

Most of the early collectors of Negro spirituals, being ignorant of their history, read meanings into them which were not there originally. The desire for freedom expressed in many songs might have come to represent physical freedom to the slave in time, but these songs were either white songs which had reference to freedom from sin, or songs written for him by abolitionists.[24] New meanings and a few new stanzas no doubt grew out of the Civil War, but such new stanzas are rare. For example, the song known as *Who'll Jine Dat Union* on St. Helena Island might with very little imagination be taken as a Negro Civil War song, but it existed, with the possible exception of one stanza, as a white revival song at least twenty years before the Civil War began.

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[23] R. Nathaniel Dett, ed., *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro*, p. xv.

[24] On this point, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 50-51.

Specific Lines. A list of all of the lines which are either very similar or identical in white and Negro songs would be extensive. The following lines are from a single white song book:[28]

Ride on, Jesus.

O, there will be mourning.

O, Lord, remember me.

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

If you get there before I do,
Look out for me, I'm coming too.

I have some friends before me gone,
And I'm resolved to travel on.

I am bound for the land of Canaan.

We're going to see the bleeding Lamb.

O, could I hear some sinner pray.

Come to Jesus just now.

Jesus, my all to heaven is gone, etc.

I want to wear the crown.

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[28] *Millennial Harp.*

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● 533 King Jesus is my captain.

177 Lay this body down.

We're on our journey home.

There will be a mighty wailing.

O sinner, you will tremble.

Then we'll shout, our sufferings over.

I will be in this band, hallelujah.

As I was walking out one day,
And thinking about this good old way.

O shout on, children, shout you're free,
For Christ has bought your liberty!

You'll hear the trumpet sounding.

You'll hear the thunders roaring.

You'll see the world a burning.

Oh, the Bible is my compass.

Where are now the Hebrew children?

You will see the graves a bursting.

Then the warfare will be ended.

Gabriel's going to blow.

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Blow ye the trumpet, blow.

And Sabbaths never end.

A few more days, or months, at most;
My troubles will be o'er.

Arise and shine . . .
The year of jubilee.

Bid rocks and mountains fall on them,
But rocks and mountains fly.

Angels, roll the rock away.

I never shall forget the day
When Jesus washed my sins away.

It's the old ship of Zion, etc.

These are not all the lines that might be cited. In *The Christian Lyre, The Revivalist, Zion Songster, The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*, and other song books there are many other parallels.[26] In addition to lines which are the same or nearly the same in both white songs and Negro spirituals, there are numerous instances where the wording of a spiritual is apparently merely a simplification of the white phraseology.

There are not very many instances in which a white song was taken over in its entirety by the Negroes.[27] The line, or at most the stanza, seems to be the unit of transfer.

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[26] See, for example, White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 48-9.

[27] More instances exist, however, than have been admitted even by writers like White, and I am convinced that if we had complete records of the white songs which were never published we would find a surprising number of cases where practically an entire song was taken over by Negroes.

533 177 In view of the illiteracy of the slave and the custom of lining out songs among illiterate whites and Negroes, it is natural that the line or the short stanza should have become the unit remembered. Just as the white people took the old church hymns and converted them into something less dignified and less difficult to learn, so did the Negroes. 000 The whites took Watts' hymn, "Jesus My All to Heaven Is Gone," inserted refrain lines and chorus and made a quite different song of it. In the *Millennial Harp* alone there are two versions of this hymn.[28] One has the refrain, "I want to wear the crown," and a chorus consisting mostly of "My heart says praise the Lord"; the other has the refrain, "Jesus says he will be with us to the end," and a simple chorus. 533 177 Illiterate people depend upon memory, and neither whites nor Negroes limited themselves to the traditional hymn stanzas. Any stanza of a hymn or of some other religious song was likely to be taken up and used wherever it would fit. The process was not peculiar to the Negroes. Indeed, they not only derived the pattern from the whites but some of their songs of this type were undoubtedly taken from the whites after the latter had manufactured them.

533 171 *Form or Pattern.* Several writers have suggested that the repetitive refrains and choruses of the spirituals, together with the custom of singing with solo, or leader, and chorus, are distinctive traits of Negro songs.[29] Take *Swing Low*, for example. Every line is followed by the

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[28] See I, 66; II, 36. In this connection, see an item in the New York *Times*, April 11, 1865, from Richmond in which the correspondent related that the Negroes held a "Jubilee Meeting" during which they sang this same song, with the refrain, "I'm going to join in this army."

[29] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*; J. W. Work, *Folk Songs of the American Negro*; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of Negro Spirituals*.

refrain, "Comin' for to carry me home," while each stanza of four lines is followed by the chorus,

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

The same type exists among the old white songs, of which *Canaan* is an example:[30]

STANZA: Together let us sweetly live,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
Together let us sweetly die,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

CHORUS: O Canaan, bright Canaan,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
O Canaan, it is my happy home,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

A slightly different pattern with first, second, and fourth lines the same is found in many Negro songs, typified by the following stanza:

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Parallels also exist in the white songs. For instance:

Oh, Lord, remember me,
Oh, Lord, remember me.
Now in the bowels of thy love,
Oh, Lord, remember me.[31]

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[30] One of the most popular of the revival songs, found in practically every religious songster in the ante-bellum period. See *Millennial Harp*, I, 58. This hymn is attributed to John Moffit, about 1829, according to White.

[31] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42.

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A still different variation of the repetitive pattern is that in which the first three lines of a quatrain are the same, as in

Good news, the chariot's comin',
Good news, the chariot's comin',
Good news, the chariot's comin',
An' I don't want her leave-a me behin'.

Parallel patterns are plentiful in the white songs in such stanzas as these:

I'm on my way to glory, (3 times)
Ye followers of the lamb.[32]

There'll be no more sorrow, (3 times)
When we all shall meet above.[33]

A further feature of the repetitive trait in Negro songs is the way in which numerous stanzas are built up by the simple insertion of such variations as *father*, *mother*, *preacher*, *deacon*, etc. This pattern existed not only in traditional English folk songs, but also in the white revival songs. In *My Brother, I Wish you Well*, a very popular white song, a stanza and chorus of fifty-two words are expanded into a song of eight stanzas totalling 418 words by the introduction of only nine new words, such as *sister*, *mother*, *neighbors*, *pastor*, *poor sinner*, etc.[34]

It can safely be asserted that there is no stanza form or repetitive pattern in the Negro spirituals which is not also found in the white revival songs.

It is customary for a spiritual to be begun with the chorus rather than the first stanza. This custom evi-

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[32] *Ibid.*, II, 11.

[33] *Ibid.*, I, 34.

[34] *Millennial Harp*, I, 46.

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dently existed in the white camp meetings, for some of the 533 tunes in the old books are printed with the chorus at the 171 beginning. Certainly the custom is traditional among white revival singers today, as anyone who is familiar with rural white revivals can testify.

As for the custom of singing with a lead or solo part, 533 the other voices joining in on refrain lines, there are several factors to be considered. First, the pattern is not as common in Negro songs as one might suppose. The leader, it is true, often sings the first few words or even the first line unaided. This is merely to indicate which stanza is to be sung next. As soon as the others catch the sign, they join in. This is different from the true solo-chorus pattern, which is found in such stanzas as the following:

Solo: Hypocrite, hypocrite, God despise
All: Bear yo' burden in de heat of de day.
Solo: Tongue so sharp an' he will tell lies,
All: Bear, etc.

Now on St. Helena, where presumably, any African song pattern should have flourished and survived, this true solo-chorus pattern is rather rare, occurring in about 15 per cent of the spirituals sung there; whereas in the up-country spirituals, judging by the Hampton and Fisk collections, this pattern is more common.[28] Finally, there is 533 the point that the leader-chorus pattern also existed to 171 some extent in the white songs.[29] The extent of its use can

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[28] In the latest Hampton edition, practically nine-tenths of the songs are arranged in this way. Much of this is due, I believe, to an effort to arrange the songs so as to be especially suitable for quartet singing. In ordinary singing, some of the "solo" sections are really sung *in unison*, which is a different matter.

[29] The arrangement of some of the tunes indicates this. See also some of the statements quoted above from Bellinger's *Stray Leaves*, where it was stated that

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● 533 171 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how* the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

533 171 177 The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pattern in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least, a product of the cultural situation during the time the Negro was taking over the white revival songs. The pattern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new song was being taught to people who were nearly all illiterate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new songs were being taught them. 533 178 There is, of course, the possibility that this style of singing represents a survival of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Ballanta, and other writers.

TUNES

533 *Modes.* The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[37] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[38] is as follows:

	NEGRO SONGS PER CENT	WHITE SONGS PER CENT
Major	83.8	78.9
Minor	11.7	18.6
Mixed or vague	4.4	2.4

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(533) (171) ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices replied with certain words.

[37] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[38] From *The Christian Lyre* and *Millennial Harp.*

533 There is quite evidently no significant point of difference here. In fact, the only significant thing here is the remarkable agreement between the modal distributions of the white and the Negro songs. Krehbiel's figures showing that about one-tenth of Negro songs are minor were published years ago, yet the assertion that Negro music is predominantly minor is still heard.[29] Not only is Negro music predominantly major, but it is less in the minor mode than were the white revival songs of a century ago. Minors are practically extinct in ordinary white church music today, but many weird tunes in that mode are to be found in the old revival songsters.

533 171 *Deviations from the Conventional Scale.* Of more importance, however, is a comparison of the details of the distributions within the major and minor modes. While Western music in general is based on what is called the diatonic scale of seven tones, all tunes do not necessarily make use of all the possible tones in the scale. In a given tune, one or more tones may be missing or sharped or flatted. The presence or absence of such variations from the conventional scale is a significant point in the comparison of two musics. The following list comprises

[29] Persons untrained in music tend to identify any plaintive or weird tune as minor, ignorant of the fact that this term designates a specific musical trait which is determined by the tonal relations and which may or may not give an impression of sadness. It is possible to arrange major and minor chords or melodies so that even a musical person will confuse them. An interesting incident recently appeared in Reed Smith's *South Carolina Ballads*, p. 144. As good an observer as Smith described a certain song as "a peculiar minor air," yet the tune is major throughout. The mistake arose, I think, because the fourth and seventh tones are missing. This leads me to the point that the extensive use of the pentatonic scales in Negro songs (i.e. major with the fourth and seventh tones omitted) is responsible for the layman's belief that Negro music tends to be minor. The absence of the fourth and seventh in pentatonic tunes does often produce plaintive effects, and this, together with the customary minor-sad association, is sufficient to explain the error.

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all the variations of the major mode which occurred more than once in the two white song books mentioned above. The deviations are listed in the order of their importance, the most frequent one being at the head of the list. In the parallel column the presence or absence of these same deviations is indicated, the figures denoting the rank of the trait in Negro songs.

	Deviations in White Songs	Rank of Same in Negro Songs
1.	Absence of seventh tone	2
2.	Absence of fourth and seventh	1
3.	Absence of fourth	3
4.	Absence of sixth	4
5.	Flat seventh	5
6.	Absence of sixth and seventh	6
7.	Flat third	7

Every variation in the white songs is found in the Negro songs, and none is present in the Negro songs which is not also found in the white songs. Furthermore, the only point of difference in the ranks of the traits in the major mode is that the absence of the fourth and seventh tones heads the list for Negro songs and comes second in the white songs.

Krehbiel thought that the tunes in the minor mode show the independence of the spirituals of European influence. He named the following deviations as significant: raised seventh, raised sixth, and absence of sixth.[40] These are exactly the same three most frequent deviations in the white minor tunes which I analyzed.

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[40] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 83 et seq. Fisher, using a different grouping, gets the following: minor with flat seventh, 32; with sharp seventh (harmonic), 15; without seventh, 14; with sharp and flat seventh, 7; total, 68. See *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

Taking up now more detailed comparisons between the white songs and the spirituals, we find the following distribution of traits for the songs in the major mode.[41]

	NUMBER		PER CENT	
	WHITE	NEGRO‡	WHITE	NEGRO
Pentatonic	23	111	9.6	25.1
No seventh	39	78	16.2	17.6
No fourth	10	45	4.2	10.2
Flat seventh	8	20	3.3	4.5
No sixth	12	*	5.0	*
No sixth and seventh	5	*	2.1	*
Other major	143	188	59.6	42.6
Total	240	442	100.0	100.0

‡ Figures taken from Krehbiel's study of 527 Negro songs. See *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 43.

* Krehbiel did not list these at all. They are found in the spirituals to about the same extent as in white songs. A count of 200 of the same songs that Krehbiel used shows the absence of sixth in 6.3 per cent of the cases, and the absence of sixth and seventh in 2.9 per cent of the cases.

Several things stand forth in this table. First, the flat seventh, so often spoken of as a characteristic of American Negro music, turns out to be relatively rare. It will be discussed presently. Next, the table shows that the absence of the fourth tone and the absence of the seventh tone in the spirituals are actually more significant statistically than the flat seventh. But these are also present in white songs in sufficient proportion to prohibit their being listed as distinctive traits of the spirituals.

The proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is high—25.1 per cent of all the majors as against 9.6 per cent in the white songs. The pentatonic scale, with the

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[41] For Fisher's data on spirituals, which are very similar to Krehbiel's, see his *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

•533 171 fourth and seventh tones omitted, is said by Krehbiel, Work, Dett, Ballanta, and others to be the outstanding characteristic of native African music. Here, then, would seem to be positive proof of the influence of African music on the spirituals. However, several points of interest need to be discussed here.

First, the pentatonic scale is not entirely unknown to the white songs, as it is found in nearly 10 per cent of all tunes in the major mode in the two books studied. This scale seems to be a sort of simplified medium of musical expression, for it is the basis of the music of most of the less civilized peoples, and is found in the simpler songs of the English and Americans—the nursery songs, children's game songs, folk ballads, unsophisticated religious songs—to a greater extent than among the art songs.

533 177 Some of the writers on Negro songs have pointed out the similarity of Negro and Scotch music in respect to pentatonic tunes, but they have always vigorously denied any possible Scotch influence on Negro music. In this, they are in error. They contend that there were not enough Scotch in the South in colonial and ante-bellum days to have left any influence on the music of the time. This contention falls down in the face of facts which show that, aside from the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration which came from the North and settled in the Southern piedmont and mountain regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a considerable sprinkling of both Highland and Lowland Scotch in the Southern slave states, entering by way of Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Estimates for colonial North Carolina,

for example, place the proportion of Scotch at from 11 to 533
40 per cent of the total white population.[42] 177

But, what is of greater significance, the folk-song culture of the English and the English-speaking Scotch is essentially the same.[43] This is especially true of the Lowland Scotch and the Northern English, and this is the area from which came the majority of people whom we call Scotch-Irish. The use of the "gapped" scale turns out not to be confined to the Scotch, but to be characteristic of folk singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[44] At any rate, whether one calls them Scotch, Scotch-Irish, or English, the music which these people brought to this country is in many respects similar to the music of the Negro spirituals. Recent work has shown that the traditional English and Scottish folk music has survived to a surprising extent in this country. What of the presence of the pentatonic mode in this music? 533 171 177

In his *South Carolina Ballads*, Professor Reed Smith 000 published fourteen traditional ballad tunes collected from white people. Four, or 28 per cent, of these are pentatonic. From the Appalachians, where these old songs have survived best, larger collections are available. In the great collection contained in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 324 folk tunes are published. The "gapped" scale is predominant. The pentatonic, with fourth and seventh tones omitted, is the outstanding scale of these songs. The proportions of

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[42] See U. S. Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 117. The highest estimate, 40 per cent, is made by Professor R. D. W. Connor of the University of North Carolina. See his *History of North Carolina*.

[43] Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Introduction, p. xix.

[44] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Song*; also Campbell and Sharp, Introduction.

which they brought with them to America and which they 000
have preserved so well in the mountains. The Scotch-Irish and English peasantry, with their love of song and their religious zeal, undoubtedly played a conspicuous part in shaping the folk music of the camp meetings. The revival movement came along on the heels of the great migration from Pennsylvania to the Southern piedmont. In fact, some of the editorial writers of a century ago attributed the successes and the excesses of the revivals to the Scotch-Irish.

The theory that the pentatonic scale in the Negro spirituals 533
is a distinctive trait owing its origin to African music 171
loses some of its force. For it is now just as plausible to 177
say that, since the general tendency has been for the Negro to adopt white culture patterns, and since the proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is the same as in the English and Scottish folk songs, the Negro took over his religious folk songs from the folk productions of the English and Scotch-Irish. At any rate it cannot be logically maintained that a trait which exists in English folk music in America to the same extent as it does in Negro folk music is a *distinctive* trait of Negro music.

The absence of the seventh tone in the tunes of the 000
spirituals is statistically next in importance. This, however, is as frequent in the white revival songs as in the spirituals—16.2 per cent in the former and 17.6 per cent in the latter. Analysis of the collections of English ballad music surviving in America shows about the same proportion of no-seventh tunes. Obviously there is nothing distinctively Negro here. The history of the missing seventh in English folk music is similar to that of the pentatonic

> the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?[50] 000
>
> This use of the flatted seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful.[51]

Ballanta has tried to distinguish between the Negro's flat seventh and the use of that tone in white music.[52] 533 171 With the Negro, he says, the tone is a regular or normal element in the scale, not necessitating any modulation, while in white music the occurrence of this tone always induces a modulation to the key of the subdominant, as from C-major to F-major, for example. Ballanta is quite right if he is thinking of conventional white music, for training in our present melodic system has made it difficult for musicians to conceive of the use of a flat seventh without modulating to a flatter key. The distinction which he claims for this tone in Negro music, however, is exactly the same thing which characterizes the English folk use of the flat seventh, namely, as a natural tone in the scale inducing no modulation. This use of it occurs in the traditional ballads and other songs surviving in the Appalachians. Since the Negro was in contact with the English (177) folk music culture throughout the period of slavery, it is just as logical to suppose that his use of the flat seventh was borrowed as to believe that he brought it from Africa.

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[50] *English Folk-Song*, pp. 55-6.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

[52] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Foreword, xiv.

●533 171 Perhaps it is no accident that the proportion of flat sevenths is so nearly the same in English-American folk music and the Negro spirituals. At any rate, the flat seventh should not be thought of as a peculiar trait of Negro music.

There is one more point at which the music of the spirituals is said to vary from white music, and that is on the third tone of the scale. Any collector of Negro tunes can vouch for the fact that a singer sometimes sings a third which is neither the regular tone nor its flat. It is as a rule midway between the third and its flat (in C-scale, for example, between E and E flat.) The term "neutral third" has been applied to this tone. It cannot be represented on our conventional staff, hence its frequency has never been actually noted down as has the flat seventh.[33] From experience I should judge it to be of about the same frequency as the flat seventh. In *Phonophotography in Folk Music,* Metfessel has pictured two or three actual instances of the neutral third. He discusses it as a possible African trait in Negro music, intimating that this is the probable explanation. However, I have heard white folk singers use exactly the same intonation of the third, and it was derived by them not from the Negro but from their English folk music culture. To quote Sharp again:

> It must be understood that the third is not a fixed note in the folk-scale, as it is in both of the modern scales. The English folk-singer varies the intonation of this note very considerably. His major third is never so sharp as the corresponding interval in the tempered scale, to which modern ears are attuned. On the other hand, it is often so flat that it is hardly to be distinguished from the minor third. Frequently, too, it is a "neutral" third,

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[33] Strictly speaking, the flat seventh is not always flat enough to deserve that name, for it is sometimes intoned between the major seventh and minor seventh. It would really be more accurate to call it neutral.

533 171 i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[84]

To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

533 178 [177] Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question?

The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major

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[84] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.

533 (178) tunes! The frequency of the pentatonic in the 527 spirituals[55] studied by Krehbiel was 25.1 per cent. Thus the proportion of pentatonics was nearly twice as high in the spirituals from other sections as in those from St. Helena. The recent collection made on St. Helena by Ballanta, however, contains a very high proportion of pentatonic tunes—46 per cent.[56] Furthermore, as was pointed out in a previous connection, practically every song recorded by Allen sixty-two years before had been forgotten or was sung only rarely when Ballanta made his collection. In other words, a new crop of songs had come to the front since the Civil War, and the proportion of pentatonics had increased. Did this new crop originate on St. Helena? It is extremely unlikely that it did. In a collection of spirituals made by Miss Mary A. Grissom in Kentucky, about half of the songs are the same as those now sung on St. Helena.[57] If these originated on St. Helena since the Civil War, how does it happen that they got over to Kentucky without being picked up *en route* by some of the

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[55] Including the Allen collection.

(114) [56] *Too high*, as the St. Helena folk would say. I am convinced that, while there has been an increase in the proportion of pentatonics on the island, it is not this great. Ballanta, a native African, must have been so accustomed to a pentatonic scale that he heard some of the spirituals as pentatonic when they were really not. In several instances I found that he had written without fourths and sevenths tunes in which I heard distinctly one of these tones. I have verified this by the phonograph records which I made on the island. In all my analyses I have used a very strict definition of the pentatonic. If either the fourth or the seventh tone occurs, even only once, in any way other than as a very light passing tone, I do not class a tune as pentatonic, but put it under another head, as "no fourth" or "no seventh" or "regular major." Krehbiel used a less strict definition, for I counted the pentatonics in half of the songs which he used and obtained 19.5 per cent where he obtained 25.1 per cent. Thus Krehbiel, if he had analyzed my white revival songsters, would have found a higher proportion of pentatonics than I did.

[57] Grissom, *The Negro Sings a New Heaven*, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

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collectors of spirituals? And why are they not common 533•
property of the Negroes in the intermediate sections? The
simple explanation, I believe, is this: these songs origi- 533
nated further north than St. Helena, probably in the pied- 174
mont of North Carolina and Virginia, during the white
revival period. By the usual process of folk transmission
they spread out gradually from the area of origin, and, by
the time they reached the outlying sections like the Sea
Islands and the trans-Appalachian country, they had dis-
appeared and had been replaced by other songs in the area
of origin. It would be safe to predict that if collectors
will look into the matter they will find in other communi-
ties on the fringe of the black belt and among individuals
of the older generation in the piedmont a surprising num-
ber of these St. Helena spirituals.[88] Thus the percentage
of pentatonic tunes on St. Helena increased after the in-
filtration of songs from the area which had felt strongly
the folk music heritage of the Scotch-Irish. These con- [114]
siderations are all directly opposed to the theory that the [178]
scale peculiarities of the spirituals survive from African
traits.

Modulations. Change from one key or one mode to 533
another within a tune is practically unknown in the Negro spirituals. Modulations are frequent in conventional church music, but in the plainer music of the white revivals of a hundred years ago as recorded in the songsters, modulations were exceedingly rare. This musical heritage was derived from English folk songs, of which Sharp has said,

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[88] For example, recently a Negro woman from Chapel Hill, N. C., was com-
paring spirituals with a woman from St. Helena.. Upon hearing the St. Helena
version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, she exclaimed, "That's the way my folks used to
sing it all the time." In the up-country the other version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* has [184]
displaced this one, which is usually considered peculiar to the Sea Islands.

533 "It may be taken, as a general statement, that they never change their key or their mode."[59] Accidental sharps and flats occur occasionally both in the spirituals and in white revival songs, but they are nearly always auxiliary notes which call for no change of key or mode.

Intervals. The pitch distance of each note from the keynote or from a preceding note in a tune affords a basis of comparison of one type of music with another. When the interval is computed as of a certain number of steps below or above the keynote, it is called a keynote interval.[60] When it is computed with reference to the preceding note, it is known as a previous-note interval. A computation of intervals makes possible a statistical or composite view of a large number of tunes.

533 171 A computation of keynote intervals in the first forty-five songs in *Millennial Harp* as compared with thirty-five spirituals, taken at random from Allen's *Slave Songs* and the Fisk and Hampton collections, is summarized in the following table.[61]

	Frequency of Interval	
Keynote Intervals	White Songs	Negro Songs
1. P1 (keynote)	396	413
2. Major 3rd above keynote	388	358
3. Perfect 5th above keynote	346	268
4. Major 2nd above keynote	324	254
5. Perfect 4th above keynote	194	117
6. Perfect 4th below keynote	86	101

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[59] Sharp, *English Folk-Song*, p. 68.

[60] In *C*-scale, for example, *D* is the regular second tone, and is therefore said to be a major second from the keynote; *F* is a *perfect fourth*; *G*, a *perfect fifth*; *B*, a *major seventh*; *B flat*, a *minor seventh*, i.e., a half-step short of a *major seventh*.

[61] Omitting a few rarely used intervals which occurred only three or four times. For a similar analysis of intervals in a score of mixed Negro songs, see Metfessel, *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 142 *et seq.*

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7.	Major 6th above keynote	100	98
8.	Minor 3rd below keynote	59	63
9.	Octave above keynote	79	51
10.	Minor 2nd below keynote	52	37
11.	Minor 3rd above keynote	39	36
12.	Minor 7th above keynote	9	24
13.	Major 7th above keynote	31	6
	Total number of intervals	2,103	1,826

The intervals are ranked in the order of their importance in the Negro songs. It will be noted that the white ranks correspond very closely with these. The comparison of ranks, taking the order of the intervals in the Negro songs as the basis, is as follows:

Negro: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13
White: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 7 - 6 - 9 - 8 - 10 - 11 - 13 - 12

It will further be noted that the first three intervals listed—incidentally, these form the major triad—occupy half of the entire number of tones in both white and Negro songs. To be exact, 54 per cent of the white song intervals and 57 per cent of the Negro are in the major triad. There is an interesting difference between the distributions of these three leading intervals:

	Percentage Distribution	
	WHITE	NEGRO
Keynote	19	23
Major 3rd	18	19
Perfect 5th	17	15
	54	57
All others	46	43
	100	100

•533 171 The spread of these three intervals is rather even over the major triad in the white songs, while the Negro songs make larger use of the keynote and smaller use of the fifth tone. In other words, the Negro songs show a simpler melodic structure in the sense that they cluster more about the keynote than do the white songs. The comparison, however, develops no serious differences between the two types of song.[62]

Endings on other than the keynote. It is the usual thing for a song to end on the tonic or keynote, this being required to give a feeling of completion or satisfaction, but occasional deviations may be found. Of 205 spirituals in the major mode, thirteen end on the fifth tone rather than on the tonic; and, of 325 old white religious songs, six end on the fifth. Thus the trait is found in both types of songs, but is more frequent in the spirituals than in the white songs. The white religious songs, it should be repeated, are only partially representative of the musical environment of the colonial and ante-bellum period. The traditional ballads and other folk songs brought over from England by the white people had a considerably larger proportion of songs ending on the fifth. Several white songs end on the third, but I know of only one spiritual which ends on the third.[63]

Melodic patterns. Tunes can be grouped according to certain figures or patterns which they follow. Consider the opening phrases, for example. The most common

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[62] The comparison of the other kind of interval, the previous-note interval, cannot be included in the present study. Metfessel, p. 142 *et seq.*, has some figures on previous-note intervals, but he analyzed blues and other songs along with spirituals. He found the minor third to be the most frequent previous-note interval.

[63] Allen, *Slave Songs*, No. 88, p. 68.

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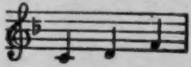
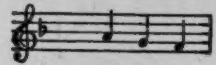
opening pattern in the spirituals, with variations in rhythm, of course, is:[67]



White folk songs and revival songs abound in the same pattern. As Sharp says, this beginning is found in "many folk-tunes, especially those of Celtic nations."[68]

Closing patterns are very diverse, but a sampling of fifty spirituals and fifty white revival songs shows that the leading pattern is composed of the last three, sometimes four, notes of the major scale in descending order. Thus



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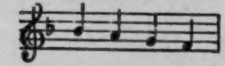

This type of ending occurs in a little over one-third of both white and Negro songs.

A tune, taken as a whole, can usually be divided into phrases which are related in certain ways. Most of the tunes of the spirituals, like the words, fall into four phrases, the patterns of which may be indicated by A - B - A - B, A - B - A - C, A - B - C - D, etc. In the familiar spiritual,

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[67] See, for example, *'Rastlin' Jacob; Old Ship of Zion; He Ain't Comin' Here to Die No Mo'; Oh, Freedom; I've Got a Mother in de Heaven; I'm a-Rolling; Old Time Religion; I'm Goin' to See My Lovin' Father When I Get Home; Go Round; Dere is Rest for de Weary Traveler; You Can't Find a New Hiding Place; I Am Hunting for a City; When I Lay My Burden Down; O Lord, Have Mercy on Me; I'm Going Down to de River Jordan; Fix Me, Jesus; Angel Rolled de Stone Away;* and others.

[68] *English Folk-Song*, p. 86.

533 171 *I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always*, for example, the pattern is A - B - A - C, that is, the first and third phrases are the same, while the second and fourth are different. This pattern is found in nearly fifty per cent of the spirituals. If the three patterns, A - B - A - C, A - B - A - B, and A - B - C - D, be taken out, only a handful of spirituals remain for other patterns. The same holds true for white revival songs and folk songs, and it cannot be argued that there is any particular melodic pattern which is peculiar to the spirituals.

533 *Harmony*. A thorough consideration of all the questions centering around the harmonies of the spirituals would involve a long technical discussion which would go beyond the limits of this treatise. In brief, it may be pointed out (1) that the testimony of the majority of the early travelers in Africa is to the effect that singing in harmony seems to have been rare or poorly developed in West Africa;[66] (2) that on the Sea Islands, where contact with white music has been limited and where the Negroes should have preserved their African harmonies if they had any, the spirituals are usually sung in unison[67]

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[66] Consult Wallaschek, *Primitive Music*.

[114] [67] The same observation was made by Allen in *Slave Songs* and by Miss Towne in her *Letters and Diary*. In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, James Weldon Johnson says that Allen probably was mistaken, that the Negroes sang in harmony but that it was bizarre and Allen did not appreciate it. I am convinced that Allen knew what he was talking about, for I can vouch for the fact that during a residence of nearly four months on St. Helena, I never heard a single spiritual sung in full harmony by the ordinary untrained folk in the schools, churches, and praise houses. Sometimes I heard a girl attempting an alto part, but it was always the conventional alto of white songs. It was a revelation to listen to a member of the Penn School Quartet attempt to teach a quartet of boys from an outlying school the simple harmonies for a spiritual which they were going to sing in a quartet contest. To those who like to say, "Get four Negro boys together and you have a quartet," I would say, true of the Negro boys and true of white boys—*provided the boys are familiar with the old reliable harmonies.*

except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other persons who have a rudimentary knowledge of sight singing; and (3) that the harmonies used by Negroes, when they use any, are exceedingly simple and are not different from conventional white harmonies. It is extremely doubtful whether the Negro has contributed anything new in harmony in the spirituals. William Arms Fisher, whose introduction to *Seventy Negro Spirituals* is a valuable essay on Negro music, recognized this when he wrote:[68] 533*

> The net result of the work of these two earnest seekers for the true Negro harmony is therefore disappointing to those expecting something unusual, for, as already stated, the harmonization in both cases is altogether conventional.

TEMPO AND RHYTHM

Metre. Williams Arms Fisher has pointed out the preponderance of duple time in Negro songs and the preponderance of triple time in other folk songs:[69] 533 171

> Out of the 405 spirituals included in the three first published collections, only 13 are in triple metre. . . . In contrast to this, 53 of the 100 songs in Bantock's *Folksongs of All Nations* are in triple or compound metre, while an analysis of Florence H. Botsford's *Folksongs of Many Peoples* shows that in two volumes containing 368 songs nearly 44 per cent are in triple metre.

An analysis of 250 white religious songs from *Millennial Harp* and *The Christian Lyre* as compared with 250 Negro spirituals from the Allen, Hampton, and Fisk collections, is as follows:

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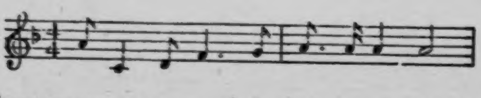
[68] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xv. The two persons referred to are Miss Emily Hallowell, who edited *Calhoun Plantation Songs*, and Mrs. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, who edited *Negro Folk-Songs, Hampton Series*.

[69] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xvi.

		Per Cent	
		Negro Songs	White Songs
•533	Duple Time	96	70
171	Triple Time	4	30

Triple time is almost unknown in the spirituals, but is found in nearly a third of the white songs studied.[70] Two-part time probably predominates among Negro singers because it is so intimately connected with their habit of swaying the body, patting the feet, and clapping the hands while singing. These things fall naturally into two-part time beats, and I have observed over and over that when the untrained Negro attempts to sing without giving himself the benefit of these bodily rhythmic clues, he is a very poor time keeper. This habit may well represent the survival of African tempo patterns.[70a]

533 *Syncopation.* Syncopation is the very soul of the rhythmic patterns of the spirituals. The emphasis is often shifted from the strong to the weak part of a time unit as in the following measures from *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen:*



There were some unusual rhythm patterns in the white revival tunes, however, as the following extracts will show:[71]

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[70] It is interesting to note, however, that, if the most folksy of the published revival songs be taken as a group, only nine or ten per cent use triple time.

[70a] It is not certain, however, that African metre is predominantly duple. Krehbiel and others seem to have assumed this. But note that C. S. Myers in Jekyll's *Jamaican Song and Story*, Appendix A, spoke of the "fondness for triple measure" in a group of African songs which he analyzed.

[71] From *Millennial Harp*, I, 40 and 47, respectively.

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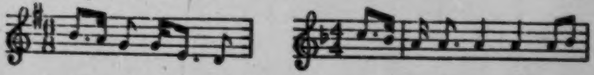

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But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes 121 533

Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

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177 •533 white songs from Negro songs.[72] Their knowledge of white religious backgrounds was very limited, and they were strongly influenced by sentimental attitudes in their decisions as to what constituted a real Negro song. Having rejected as "spurious" *Give Me Jesus, Climb Jacob's Ladder,* and *I'll Take the Wings of the Morning,* which they found in the current Methodist hymn books, they included several other very doubtful ones because they were "sung twenty-five years ago [about 1840] in Negro camp-meetings," or because someone heard them sung by Negroes before the Civil War, or because variants of a tune were found in several states. In view of what has been shown in the earlier part of this discussion concerning white religious folk songs, it is obvious that such criteria were not at all safe. A score or more of songs about which the editors had some doubts but included as genuine Negro songs probably should have been omitted altogether.

While a great deal of the tune-borrowing in the spirituals is fragmentary, there are quite a few instances of whole tunes having been taken over. The following may be cited.

The Old Ship of Zion is a spiritual which appears in nearly all of the collections. This song is not only traditional among white people, but is found in one of their religious songsters as early as 1843.[73] It exists in two distinct versions. The 1843 published version was probably only one of several tunes then used in the revivals. It began

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[72] *Slave Songs,* p. vi.

[73] *Millennial Harp,* Supplement, p. 4.

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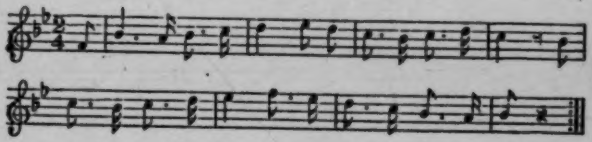
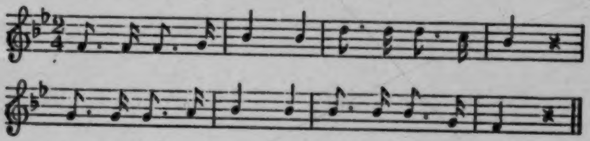
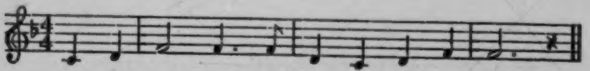


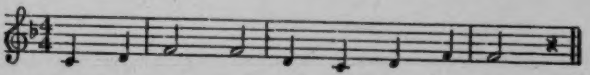
and in both words and tune it is obviously related to the Negro version, *Ol' Ship Mariah,*[74] beginning,



Another version of this tune,[75] beginning,



is the same tune as that found in one version of the spiritual *We'll Put John on the Island,*[76] and is closely akin to *Oh, Lordy, When You Come,*[77] which begins as follows:



In the same class with *Old Ship of Zion* should be mentioned several other songs which are traditional white

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[74] As sung on St. Helena Island. Ballanta's version, *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 34, is practically identical.

[75] Now rarely heard among white people, except in parodies. It is still sung in the Appalachians, however. See Richardson and Spaeth, *American Mountain Songs*, p. 71.

[76] Also sung by white people. In fact, the tunes undoubtedly were mixed before the Negroes took them over. For Negro variants see *Southern Workman*, 30, p. 590; *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro* (1924 ed.), p. 122; *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 96, 407.

[77] Sung on St. Helena Island.

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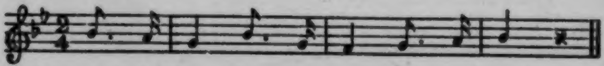
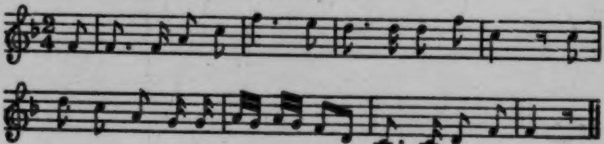
177 • 533 spirituals coming down from the era of the great revivals and which have most likely been borrowed by Negroes, viz., *Old Time Religion*, *Tell Me How You Feel When You Come Out the Wilderness*, *I Want to be Ready (Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John)*, and *Safe in the Promised Land (Wonder Where Is Good Old Daniel)*.

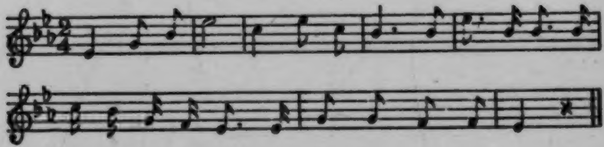
Lord, Remember Me,[78] one of the older spirituals, illustrates the way in which a song may be related to other songs. I have found two songs of this same title and sentiment in the white books.[79] The words of the chorus of one of these are like the spiritual, and the closing phrase of the tune is



The chorus of the spiritual, with closing phrase almost identical with the above phrase, is as follows:



Now the first part of this tune is the same as the chorus of another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll,*[80]



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[78] *Slave Songs*, p. 12.

[79] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42 (same as *Christian Lyre*, I, 150); and II, 64.

[80] As in Dett, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, p. 52.

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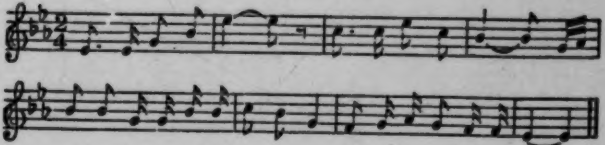
and this tune is practically identical with the chorus of *Camptown Races*, published by Stephen Foster in 1850.[81]



Krehbiel pointed out the similarity of *Lord, Remember Me* and *Camptown Races*,[82] but the more obvious connection of the latter with *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, escaped him. There have grown up various myths to the effect that Foster spent more or less time in the South and took his tunes from Negroes.[83] Foster was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent. He was never South except on a brief trip down the Mississippi and possibly a visit to Kentucky, both of these occurring after he had written most of his "Ethiopian" Melodies. Krehbiel said of the *Camptown Races* tune that "it is more likely that he [Foster] invented it and that it was borrowed in part for a hymn by the Negroes." Here we have an instance of a popular song partly displacing the religious tune which the Negroes had borrowed in *Lord, Remember Me*, and being adopted into another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which was probably already being sung to another tune.

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[81] See *Heart Songs*, pp. 352-54.

[82] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, pp. 16-17.

[83] See, for example, *Negro Year Book*, 1925-26, p. 344, for a quotation (origin not given) telling how Foster journeyed South to get the tune of *Swanee River* from a Negro woman. As a matter of fact, he inserted "Swanee" in a song he had written after careful search of a map to find a name of two syllables and romantic sound. See *Stephen Collins Foster, a Biography*, by Harold Vincent Milligan, N. Y., 1920, pp. 61, 68, 72.

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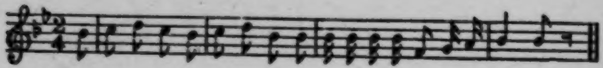
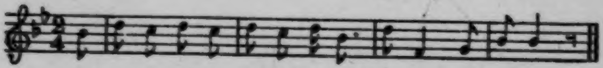
533 *Who'll Jine de Union*[84] is essentially the same as *The Christian Band*, a white song published as early as 1843.[85] The words of these two songs are about the same, except that the former uses as a refrain line "Who'll jine de union?" while the latter uses "I will be in this band, hallelujah." The following phrases, repeated, form the burden of the white song,



and the following phrases, repeated, form the stanzas of the spiritual:



The spiritual is an improvement melodically and rhythmically over the white song, but is nevertheless derived from it or from a variant of it which was never published in the white songsters.

The beautiful spiritual, *I'm a-Rolling Through an Unfriendly World*,[86] is akin to a white tune, *Judgment*, although the rhythm of the latter has been changed. There is probably a connecting link which is extinct, but the kinship becomes apparent if one neglects rhythm for the moment. The stanza tune *Judgment*,[87] with the notes

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[84] Published in *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, 1874, p. 220, and in successive editions of the Hampton songs, the latest being in Dett's edition, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 142. This song is widely known, being sung on St. Helena Island.

[85] *Millennial Harp*, II, 30. There were earlier editions of this book, also preceding volumes of a similar nature by the same editors, but I am unable to find the earliest date of their publication.

[86] See Dett, *op. cit.*, p. 186, or any other good collection of spirituals.

[87] *Christian Lyre*, I, 90. Also in *Millennial Harp*, I, 32.

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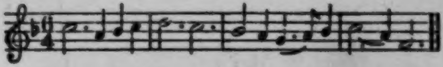
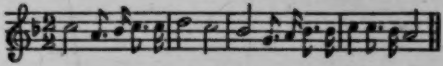
spaced to facilitate comparison with the spiritual immediately below it, is as follows:[88]

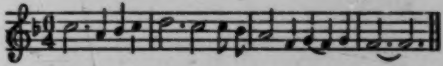
Hymn:



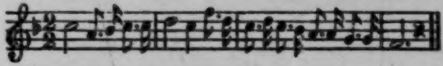
Spiritual:



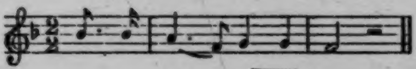
Hymn:



Spiritual:

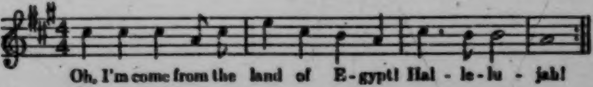


The chorus of *I'm a-Rolling* is not so closely related to *Judgment,* although the final phrase,



is the same as the final phrase of *Judgment* (see above).

The next example illustrates splendidly the possibility of relationship in both subject matter and tune between a spiritual and an old white song. The *Mariner's Hymn,*[89] as it was called in the white songsters, was made up of two simple and very similar phrases, one sung by a male voice, the other by a female voice. The latter phrase was as follows:



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[88] Incidentally, the harmonization published in the white songsters is the same as that in the spiritual.

[89] See *Millennial Harp,* II, 39.

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Now this tune—pentatonic, by the way—probably came from some sailor song,[80] and it must have had several variants among the white people. It is no accident that when the Negroes took it over the salt water stayed with it. As *I've Been Down into the Sea*, it is one of the most beautiful spirituals sung on St. Helena.[81] The stanzas have this tune,

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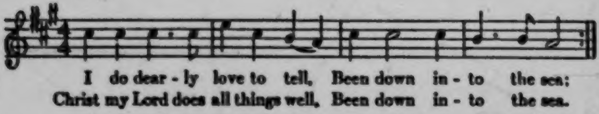
I do dear - ly love to tell, Been down in - to the sea:
Christ my Lord does all things well, Been down in - to the sea.

which is the same as the *Mariner's Hymn*, allowing for the greater number of syllables in the words of the closing measure of the spiritual. The chorus of the spiritual,

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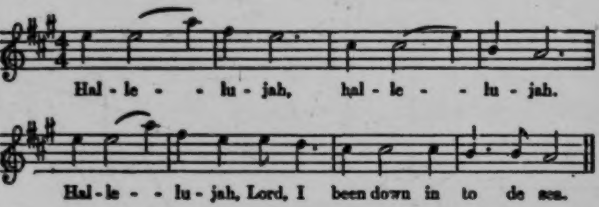
Hal - le - - lu - jah, hal - le - - lu - jah.
Hal - le - - - lu - jah, Lord, I been down in to de sea.

may appear at first to be an innovation, but an examination shows it to be related to the closing tones of the stanza tune and to the following phrase from the chorus of another white song:[82]

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[80] It is similar to the hoisting chantey, *Blow, Boys, Blow*, for a version of which see *The Book of a Thousand Songs*. Incidentally, this chantey is pentatonic and is syncopated.

[81] For a published version, very similar to the St. Helena version given above, see James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, p. 172.

[82] *Don't You See My Jesus Coming?* in *Millennial Harp*, I, 62; or *The Female Pilgrim* in *The Christian Lyre*, II, 212. The tune is pentatonic.

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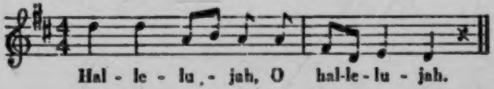
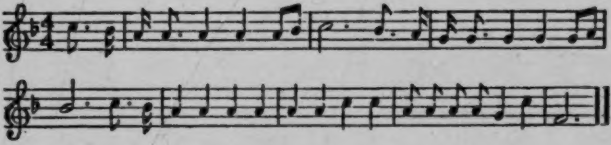
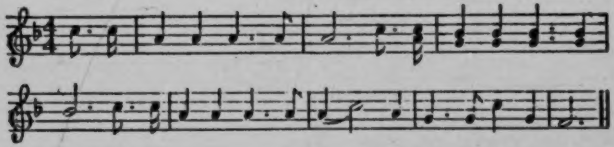


The tune of a white song *My Brother, I Wish You Well* is so much like the tune of the spiritual *There's a Meeting Here Tonight* that there was probably a connection between them. The white tune is as follows:[93]



The chorus of the spiritual is as follows:[94]



The spiritual *Just Now,*[95] formerly sung in the upper South, but rarely heard now, was taken, both words and tune, from the white hymn, *Come to Jesus,*[96] How perfectly the Negro learned the song is indicated by the tunes below. The first is the white hymn, the second the spirit-

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[93] *Millennial Harp*, I, 47.

[94] Alternative notes are shown in several measures because this phrase is sung both ways. See *Slave Songs*, p. 9, for two variants; also *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 182.

[95] See *Slave Songs*, p. 67. The editors thought that this became a Methodist hymn *after* the Negroes started it, and they included it because it was sung by Negroes in Maryland 25 years before. It was already at that time an Adventist hymn.

[96] *Millennial Harp*, I, 63.

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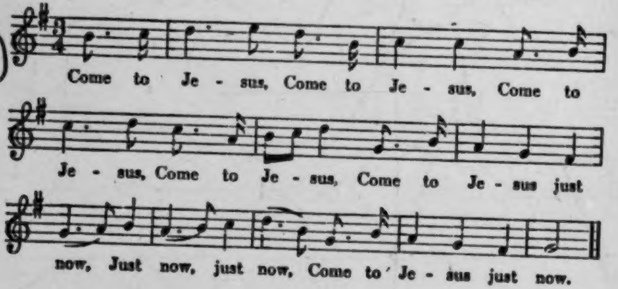
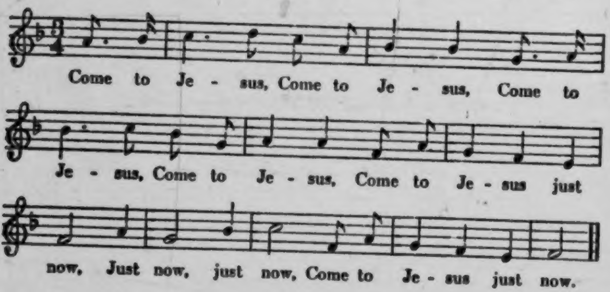
ual. The first stanza of the white hymn has exactly the same words as the third stanza of the Negro song.[97]


Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to
Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus just
now, Just now, just now, Come to Je - sus just now.


Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to
Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus just
now, Just now, just now, Come to Je - sus just now.

The task of identifying two tunes which are related is a thrilling one, but is very teasing and elusive. One might come across a spiritual tune which unmistakably suggests an old white tune, yet one may be unable to find the white tune without hours and hours of search. Sometimes the words and music throughout are similar, as in some of the cases cited above, and it is easy to find the tune wanted. Sometimes there is a slight clue in the

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[97] In another stanza the white song has "Get religion just now," while the Negro song has "Good religion just now."

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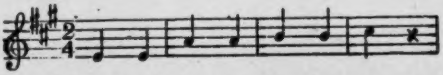
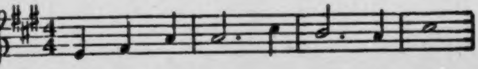
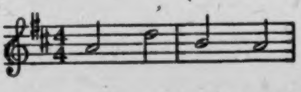
words of the spiritual which throws light on its origin. For example, in Nettleton's *Village Hymns*,[98] which contains words only, there is a song beginning "Angel, roll the rock away." There is a spiritual known as *De Angel Rolled de Stone Away.*[99] The white song is noted as sung to a tune called Hampton. In another hymn book[100] we find this tune to entirely different words. The opening strain is



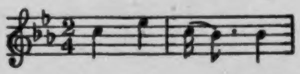
The spiritual begins in a very similar way:



and three of the four phrases in the spirituals are made up of this strain. To cite another example, several white songs contained the expression, "ride on, Jesus," and one for which the tune is available has the following phrase on the words, "ride on, Jesus."[101]



The spiritual, *Ride on, Jesus*, has the same phrase:[102]



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[98] P. 117.

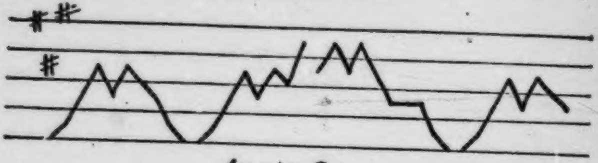
[99] See *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 80, for a published version.

[100] *Christian Lyre*, II, 20.

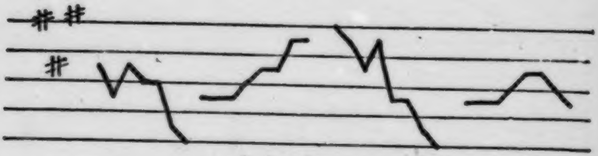
[101] *Millennial Harp*, I, 52.

[102] Natalie Curtis Burlin, *Negro Folk-Songs*, Book I, No. 1; also *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 92.

177
533 The rhythmic changes which took place in the songs borrowed from white people are significant. They account for some of the difficulty one encounters in tracing melodic parallels. To cite an instance of this sort: there is evidence that, omitting rhythmic factors, the old favorite, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* is a variant of one of the tunes of *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound.* The following tune graph, which represents the melody but neglects tempo, shows this possibility.[103]



Amazing Grace



Swing Low

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The examples cited above illustrate various types of borrowing: (1) both tune and words borrowed with very little alteration; (2) tune alone borrowed, and melodic or rhythmic adaptations introduced by Negroes; (3) a short phrase of a white tune used as the basis for a spiritual tune, with characteristic rhythmic changes. While some of the borrowed spirituals appear on the face to be more or less "spurious," others, such as *Roll, Jordan, Roll, I'm a-Rolling, I've Been Down Into de Sea,* etc., are among the best of Negro songs.

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[103] In this connection I might state that R. W. Gordon, of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, told me that he has a traditional white version of *Swing Low.* This may be a connecting link between *Amazing Grace* and the spiritual. I am aware that it has recently been claimed that the original tune of *Swing Low* has been found in Africa, but I consider the claim of no value until some direct evidence is presented.

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The question at once comes up, how important are these cases statistically? That is difficult to say, but the situation may be summed up in this way: out of 82 tunes in Part I and Part II of the songster, *Millennial Harp,* ten, or one-eighth, may be traced in whole or in part into the spirituals. If this one book, which contains a mere sprinkling of the really folksy white songs, can account for so many spirituals, the chances are very high that, if the total range of white religious folk tunes were available, the proportion of tunes which crossed over into the spirituals would be surprisingly large. Of more importance than the statistical factor, however, is the fact that there are borrowed tunes among the spirituals which are in no way distinguishable from the rest of the spiritual tunes. Thus we have additional confirmation of the findings indicated previously, namely, that, with the exception of rhythm and possibly larger use of the pentatonic scale, the spirituals are not different musically from white folk tunes.

If, in addition to these considerations, it be remembered that this study has not attempted to explore the vast possibilities of specific borrowings from the popular ballads, play songs, and nursery songs brought to this country from England, nor from early American popular music and later minstrel music;[104] that numerous

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[104] To indicate possibilities, note the similarity of a part of *In Bright Mansions Above* and *Wearing of the Green;* and the likeness of *Steal Away* to *Farmer's in the Dell.*

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177 songs known as spirituals by the Negroes survive in the
533 white folk tradition as white songs;[105] and that instances are known of a white man's having composed spirituals for Negroes;[106] it will be seen that the story of the origin of the spirituals has only begun to be written. But the data yielded by even a small segment of white religious folk songs seem to indicate that the anthropological question as to what happened when the Negro, with a system of music admittedly different, came into contact with white music in the master-slave relationship, deserves an answer similar to that given in regard to dialect, namely, that the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed from white folk music.

To claim that the Negro took all of the spirituals from white tunes, that he has contributed nothing himself, would be stupid. There are undoubtedly spirituals of Negro composition, there are some white songs of Negro origin, and there are probably a few tunes which came from Africa. Furthermore, the instances of borrowing show that Negroes usually made rhythmic changes in the tunes they borrowed. But, if the several possible theories concerning
[178] the spirituals be listed as follows: (1) they are derived directly from Africa, (2) they are of American Negro origin,

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[105] For example, Howard W. Odum says that *We're Goin' to End This Warfare (Down by the River)* was sung in Georgia during his youth as a white camp-meeting song. For data along this line, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, Chaps. I, II, and Appendix III; and Pound, "The Ancestry of a Negro Spiritual," *Modern Language Notes*, 33, pp. 442-4.

[106] Henry C. Work, a white abolitionist, wrote *Kingdom's Coming*, *Freedom Over Me*, and *Babylon is Fallen*. See *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 51, 170. In this connection I might also point out that art songs of recent origin are even now in process of becoming "adopted" as Negro spirituals, examples being *Deep River* and *Going Home*, the latter based on a movement of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

based on African patterns, (3) they are selections from 177
white music, selections influenced by the Negro's African 178
musical heritage, (4) they are largely borrowed directly 533
from white folk music, as attested by the presence of the same traits to about the same extent in both musics; then it is seen that either of the latter two theories is more plausible than the former two.

There has been so much sentimentalizing on the spirituals that it will be difficult for some people to accept such a conclusion. The various statements of the "romantic" origins of the spirituals, of their being "America's only indigenous folk song," of their springing "ready made from the white heat of religious fervor," may be interesting as sentiments, but as scientific points of view on a question of musical relationships they are worthless. It is to be hoped that those who are convinced of the African origin of the spirituals will look closely into their English-American background before they embrace their conclusions.

And what does it all come to? On the scientific side, it appears that Wallaschek was substantially correct in his judgment after all.[107] The Negro's contribution seems to have been the introduction of his own rhythmic devices, the elaboration, sometimes the simplification, of the melodic patterns of white songs, and the preservation of a large body of folk song which might otherwise have been extinct by now.

On the artistic and appreciative side, it should mean 533
nothing—that is, nothing which should change anyone's appreciation or enjoyment of the Negro spiritual. As it

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[107] See *supra*, p. 73.

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533 is found today among Negroes, it is indeed as unique, as distinctive as if it were unreservedly the creation of these people. As White has well said, "The white man would be both stupid and prejudiced if he failed to see that the Negro has long since made it his own."[198]

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[198] *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 57.

V

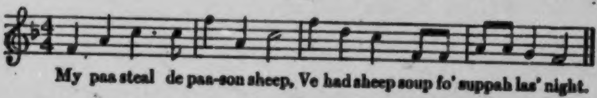
THE PARSON'S SHEEP

537

Oncë dere was a li'l boy, an' 'e paa stole de paa'son sheep, so de boy sing,

> "My paa steal de paa'son sheep,
> Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

[533)


My paa steal de paa-son sheep, Ve had sheep soup fo' suppah las' night.

De paa'son yea'd um singin'. Say, "What dat you sing, son?" "Oh, nuttin', suh." "Well, you come heah tomorrow dis same time an' sing dat same song, an' I give you ten dollahs." "All right, suh."

So dat night de boy tell his paa, say, "Paa, man gwine give me ten dollah fuh sing tomorrow." Paa say, "Le' me hear you sing um, son." De boy sing:

> "My paa stole de paa'son sheep,
> Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa knock 'im down, *Bam!* Den 'e say, "Son, sing um ag'in." Boy sing um dat same way ag'in. 'E paa knock 'im down ag'in. "Sing um ag'in, son." So dis time de boy sing:

> "My paa went a-fishin' last night,
> Vee had fish soup fuh suppah las' night."

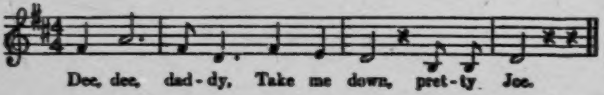
'E paa say, "Now dat's de way to sing um, son. Anybody ax you fuh sing, you sing um same like dat."

Nex' day de boy go to de place whuh paa'son say come. Paa'son deh wid lots o' oddah mens. De paa'son say, "All right, son, sing dat song." So de boy sing:

maid rise up an' say, "What you cry for, li'l gal?" "My mudder die an' my fadder marry ag'in an' my step-mudder have daughter. Dey treat me bad an' won' give me 'nough t' eat." De mermaid say, "Come down wid me." She take her down under de water to de purties' place. Give her all kin' o' good t'ing t' eat. Den she bring her back up. Dat night, de gal not want a bite t' eat after de odders done eat, but she feel so glad.

Nex' day she go back to de water an' sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe."



[533).

An' de mermaid rise up an' take her down an' give her plenty good t'ings t' eat, den bring her back up. So dat night, dey keep wonderin' why she not eat. Fin'ly de step-mudder daughter say she gwine fin' out. Nex' day she follow de gal to de river an' hear her sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe,"

an' she see de mermaid rise up an' take de gal down. She run home an' tell her mudder an' de King what she see. So nex' day dey all t'ree went down to de river widout de King daughter knowin' it. De King sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

but no mermaid. Den de step-daughter try it:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

an' up rise de mermaid. King shot de mermaid daid.

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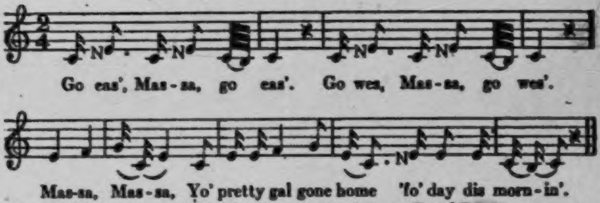
Go eas', Mas-sa, go eas'. Go wes, Mas-sa, go wes'.
Mas-sa, Mas-sa, Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis morn-in'.

NOTE: N indicates a neutral third, in this case a tone between E and E-flat.

Debbil yeah dat, an' 'e jump on 'e hoss an' staa't fuh obertake de gal. She drop one o' de needle an' big fores' grow up, an' debbil have to git ax an' cut 'e way all t'rough um. but 'e git t'rough an' 'bout to ketch de gal ag'in. She drop annodah needle, an' big rivah rise up, an' debbil have to go back an' git boat an' row across. Gal almos' home now, but debbil git across rivah an' keep a comin'. 'E jes' 'bout to ketch 'er when she drop de las' needle. When she drop dat a big fiah come an' burn up de debbil. Den she git home wid her faddah and muddah.

XV

TOO LAZY TO LIVE[11]

Once there was a slave on Wallace or Tom Fripp Plantation who was too lazy to work. His master punished him, but he wouldn't work. When his master gave him corn to grind for bread, he wanted somebody to grind

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[11] As told by Mr. Aurelius Brown, teacher in Penn School. I found several variants of this story, usually given local settings. It is interesting to note, however, that it was known more than a hundred years ago in Jamaica. In his charming *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis relates that the story was thought to have originated on a certain Jamaican plantation whose owner was accustomed to disposing of his worn-out slaves by sending them to a desolate place called "the Gulley" and leaving them to die of exposure and starvation. The cruel master always had his men bring back the shroud and board so that he would have no expense. See the song, as quoted by Lewis in his *Journal*, p. 322.

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539 it for him. Then he wanted somebody to bake the bread. When the bread was ready he wanted to know if somebody wouldn't feed him. His master said, "Any man that's too lazy to eat is too lazy to live. We'll just bury him."

They made a box and put the man in it and started to the graveyard. The man sang:

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Master sang,

"Car' [carry] 'im along, car' 'im along,"

Then the man,

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Then the Master,

"Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

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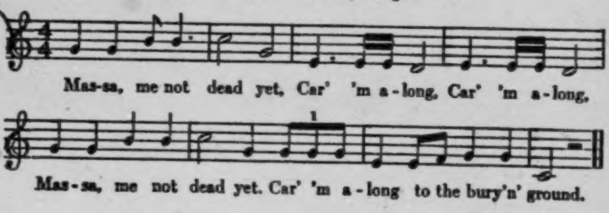
Mas-sa, me not dead yet, Car' 'm a-long, Car' 'm a-long,
1
Mas-sa, me not dead yet. Car' 'm a-long to the bury'n' ground.

They carried the man on and on toward the graveyard.

"Massa, me not dead yet."
"Car' 'im along, car' 'im along.
Got more money to buy more slaves,
Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

They took him on to the graveyard and put him in the grave and covered him up and let him die.

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To put it in de bread? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it up town? Yes, mam!
Did you shake it all round? Yes, mam!

x

What for breakfast? Bread an' butter.
Where is butter? Cat eat it.
Where is cat? In de wood.
Where is wood? Fire burn it.
Where is fire? Water out it.
Where is water? Ox drink it.
Where is ox? Butcher kill it.
Where is butcher? Dead an' gone
An' buried in de ol' bone-yard!

Game Songs[25]

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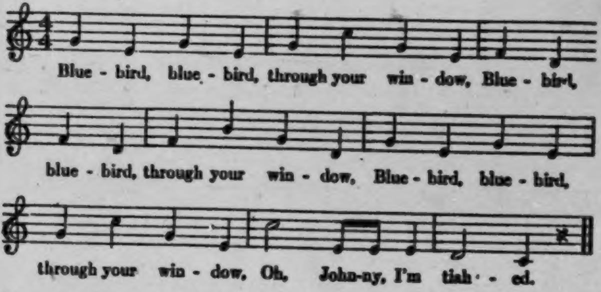
1[26]


Blue - bird, blue - bird, through your win - dow, Blue - bird,
blue - bird, through your win - dow, Blue - bird, blue - bird,
through your win - dow, Oh, John-ny, I'm tiah - - ed.

Chorus:

1. Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,

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[25] For other game songs, see Parsons, pp. 180-83.

[26] The players join hands and form a ring. As they sing the chorus, the leader weaves in and out of the ring, passing under the players' hands. At "take that little boy," etc., he puts his hands on the shoulders of a boy, and, as, the chorus begins again, the boy so indicated leaves the ring and goes with the leader. The process is repeated until all players have been touched and there is no ring left.

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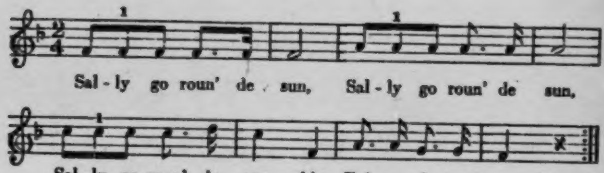
Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed [tired].

2. Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed.

3. Take that little girl, pat 'im on the shoulder, *etc.*

11[27]


Sal - ly go roun' de sun, Sal - ly go roun' de sun,
Sal - ly go roun' de sun - shine Ev' - ry af - ter - noon. (Boom!)

1. Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sunshine
Ev'ry afternoon.
Boom!

2. Repeat for other verses.

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[27] The ring begins to move clock-wise, and at the word *boom* it stops with a jerk and goes around in the opposite direction. The tune, it will be noticed, is the same as *Farmer's in the Dell.*

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III[28]

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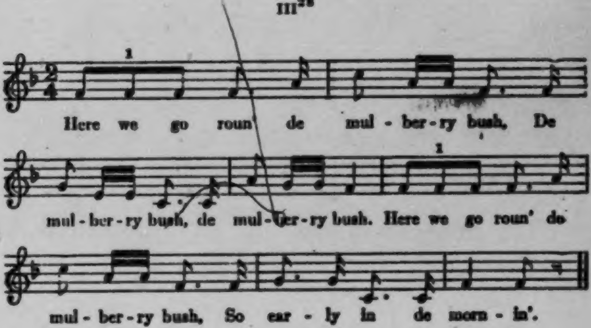
1
Here we go roun' de mul - ber - ry bush, De
1
mul - ber - ry bush, de mul - ber - ry bush. Here we go roun' de
mul - ber - ry bush, So ear - ly in de morn - in'.

Chorus:

1. Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
Mulberry bush, mulberry bush .
Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
So early in de mornin'.

2. Dis is de way we sweep our flo', *etc.*
3. Dis is de way we dus' our flo', *etc.*
4. Dis is de way we wash our face, *etc.*
5. Dis is de way we i'on our clo'es, *etc.*
6. Dis is de way we brush our hair, *etc.*
7. Dis is de way we brush our teet', *etc.*
8. Dis is de way we go to church, *etc.*

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[28] Signs are made to indicate the various motions. There is no limit to the number of stanzas. At one school the children were singing an agricultural cycle in commemoration of Planting Week. They used such lines as: "This is the way we plow the land," "plant the wheat," "hoe the corn," etc.

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IV[29]

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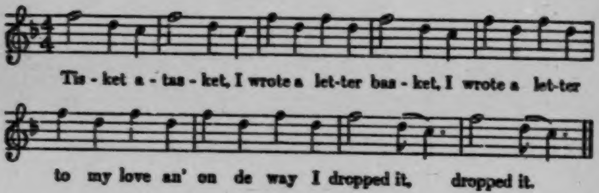
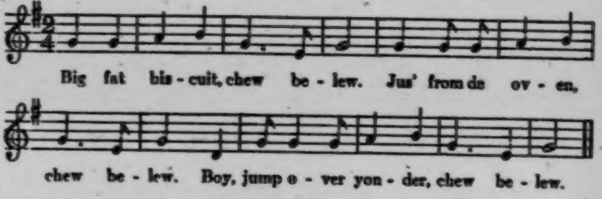

Tis - ket a - tas - ket, I wrote a let-ter bas - ket, I wrote a let-ter
to my love an' on de way I dropped it, dropped it.

1. Tiskit, a-taskit, I wrote a letter basket.
I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]


Big fat bis - cuit, chew be - lew. Jus' from de ov - en,
chew be - lew. Boy, jump o - ver yon - der, chew be - lew.

1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

FOLK BELIEFS

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In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

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[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little basket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

By plantation rule and by law of the state only one 567
slave to a plantation was permitted to carry a gun for 411
hunting, and he did so only to provide ducks for the mas- 223
ter's table or to kill the crows and blackbirds which ate the 656
seeds and the young plants in the fields.

The Negroes were also fond of singing and dancing, 567
and most planters indulged them in this propensity. One 535
South Carolina planter who had been having trouble in 535
disciplining his slaves supplied his people with fiddles and drums and "promoted dancing." To his gratification the ill temper of the slaves disappeared and peace was once more established on the plantation.[39] Their dancing was a sort of shuffle which animated the whole body, and was performed individually rather than by couples. The dance was usually held at night in the open or in one of the cabins and the entire group participated in the merrymaking. Miss Towne frequently complained after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the Negroes on her plantation had been up singing and dancing all night.

Most visitors to the Sea Islands wondered at the 567
slaves' "passionate fondness" for singing. Fredrika 533
Bremer, a Scandinavian visitor to coastal South Carolina, was of the opinion that "one must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their life." After attending a Negro church service, she declared that "they sang so that it was a pleasure to hear, with all their souls and with all their bodies in unison; for their bodies wagged, their heads nodded, their feet stamped, their knees shook, their elbows and their hands beat time to the tune and words

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[39] N. Herbemont, "On the Moral Discipline and Treatment of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, IX, 70-75.

567 533 which they sang with evident delight."[40] Captain Basil Hall, who was rowed down the Altamaha in a cypress dugout by "five smart negroes," was impressed by the "wild sort of song" with which they accompanied their labor. He thought the song "not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen at Bombay."[41] Whitelaw Reid, who heard the Negroes singing at "Brick Church" on St. Helena in 1865, described their song, "Roll Jordan Roll," as having "a curiously monotonous melody."[42] Miss Towne thought that the St. Helena folk "in their lowest state . . . could always do one thing well—sing." "At first," she said, "they sang melody alone, but after having once been given the idea of harmony, they instantly adopted it."[43]

567 527 A holiday was always the occasion for much singing, dancing, and general merrymaking. It was the custom on St. Helena Island to give the Negroes Saturday afternoon and all of Sunday, three days at Christmas, and an occasional day at the end of a hard season of work. These were holidays which the master set aside for his people and instructed his overseer to observe. P. C. J. Weston clearly indicated in his "rules to the overseer" the holidays which he wished the Negroes on his South Carolina rice plantation to have:

> No work of any sort or kind is to be permitted to be done by negroes on Good Friday, or Christmas day, or on any Sunday, except going for a Doctor, or nursing sick persons; any work of this kind done on any of these days is to be reported to the Proprietor, who

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[40] Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, p. 393.

[41] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 228.

[42] Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 103.

[43] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

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567 846 doubtless speaking from a knowledge only of the plantation where she was then residing, for her co-workers have left descriptions of various praise houses on the Island. W. C. Gannett wrote in April, 1862, that the praise house on Pine Grove plantation was "quite a nice little house,—the best on this part of the island."[81] The praise house of Eustis plantation on Ladies Island which their mistress, then living in Massachusetts, had built them was a church indeed.[82]

567 794 796 533 Once, twice, or even three times a week, those who were religiously inclined met at the praise house to sing, pray, and exhort. Edward L. Pierce estimated that about half of the adult Negroes on St. Helena were members of a church.[83] The praise meeting usually opened with a "sperichil" followed by a hymn which the leader "deaconed out" two lines at a time, reading from a well-worn psalm book, if perchance he had learned to read, pretending to read, nevertheless, holding the book nearer the flickering light as if to make out the words, all the while calling out the lines from memory. Cuffy, the leader of the praise house on Pine Grove plantation, always made his own hymns, improvised from hymns of the whites, "praying to de Lord Jedus teach um as he in de woods [to] jine
[782] one word 'ginst t'oder."[84] After another hymn and perhaps a spiritual, the leader would ask for a prayer, then

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[81] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 20 n.

[82] See also Wm. Henry Trescot, "Address on Gen. Stephen Elliott, delivered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, Sept. 8, 1866," p. 5. For many years preceding the War, Rev. Stephen Elliott, father of General Elliott, of Beaufort, "had declined the rectorship of a regular congregation, and, having built a church upon his own plantation, preached regularly and most efficiently to the slaves of the neighborhood."

[83] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I., 305.

[84] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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read a long passage from the Bible and after another prayer call upon a member to speak.

Edward L. Pierce attended several praise meetings on St. Helena in 1862 and reported that "their exhortations to personal piety were fervent, and though their language was many times confused, at least to my ear, occasionally an important instruction or a felicitous expression could be recognized. In one case, a preacher of their own, commenting on the text, 'Blessed are the meek,' exhorted his brethren not to be 'stout-minded.'"[55]

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After another prayer and song the "shout" began.[56] Although the prayer meeting invariably preceded the shout, the members considered the shout a part of their worship, explaining that "it exercise de frame."[57] Pushing the benches back to the wall and perhaps putting another piece of lightwood on the fire in the hearth and on the one which burned red before the door, the worshipers began the recreation which for the church members took the place of the informal dance.

"Old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely half-clad field hands—the women generally with gay handkerchiefs twisted about their heads and with short skirts—boys with tattered shirts and men's trousers, young girls barefooted," wrote Miss Harriet Ware who attended many a shout on St. Helena in the

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[55] Pierce, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[56] Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, S. C., a relative of the William Elliott frequently quoted in these pages, states that "the 'shout' is the object of the meeting to which the rest is the introduction." Mr. Elliott speaks from an intimate knowledge of sea-island customs. The shouts, however, which the writer attended on St. Helena Island in 1928 were invariably commenced after the praise meeting had been dismissed.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

567 early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle
796 of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin
first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after
535 the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the
floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching
motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon
brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance
567 silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of
796 the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung
by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of
535 some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*]
● 533 at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the
body of the song and clapping their hands together or on
their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic,
and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the
night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents
sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[58]

567 Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the remains
of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything
796 so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony,
but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[59] The
[535] shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular
dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer attended
567 dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um
797 feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and missionaries
535 taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went
177 instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently
in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

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[58] *Ibid.*, p. 270; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[59] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did 567
the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for 797
the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was 535
sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old (533)
dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the (534)
Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845.
"At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted (533)
to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[80]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the 567
whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations 795
of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed 793
into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[81] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

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[80] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[81] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

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The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune:

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

(782)

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[3]

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A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed-

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[3] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

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allayed. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; their songs, the ones they sang in bondage; their speech, the English their ancestors had learned when they were "tamed." But their home was one of the proudest of the Sea Islands, about whose history there is a glamour scarcely equalled in the new world. The object of French colonization, a Spanish presidio, a Scotch settlement, the home of the lone Indian trader and frontiersman, a center of indigo culture, the heart of sea-island cotton production, the scene of southern culture at its height, and one of the densest black belts in the South, this region had finally become suddenly and dramatically the home of the black people who had tilled the land and whose labor had made many of these things possible.